FASHION

April
2023

CANADA'S MOST STYLISH THRIFTER

ECO-FRIENDLY EXTENSIONS *and* WIGS

BEST **VINTAGE SHOPS**

+

TREASURE HUNTING TIPS

AURORA JAMES

THE FASHION WORLD'S #1 DISRUPTER

(and she's Canadian!)

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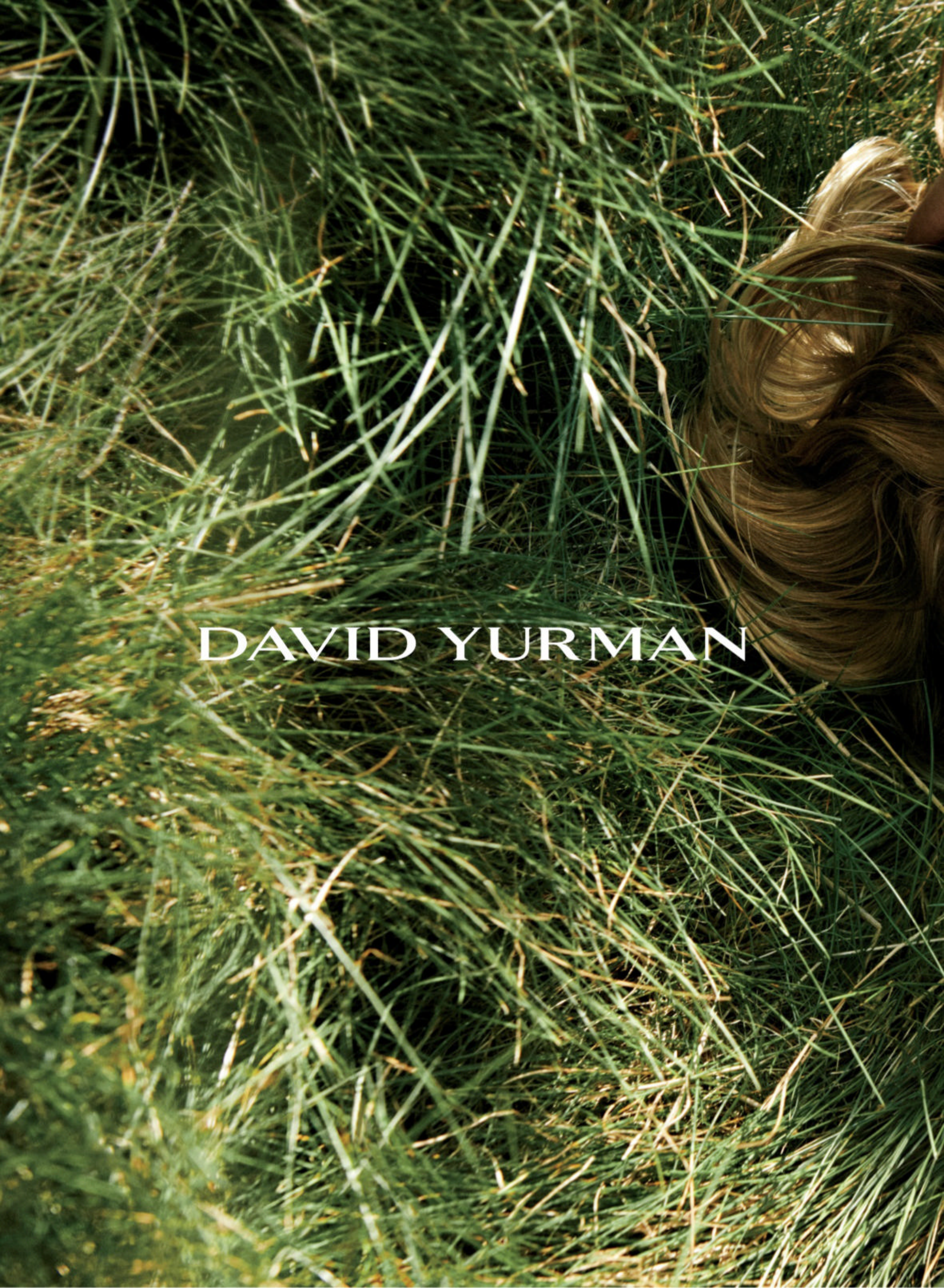
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FASHION

APRIL 2023

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VOILA!

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PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF 4KINSHIP

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FASHION
AURORA JAMES

On the Cover

Top, $1,190, and skirt, $1,780, Harbison. Shoes, $525, Brother Vellies. Earrings, $245, and ring, $85, Misho.

PHOTOGRAPHY: JEWELLERY COURTESY OF POMELLATO

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Set up camp anywhere with this wearable shelter.

RAISING THE ROOF

This collection doesn't exist.
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View the collection at **streetswearkids.com**.

OH, VANCOUVER, TORONTO AND MONTREAL—you might think you rule when it comes to fashion. But guess what? Canada's Most Stylish Thrifter lives in Saskatoon. Aldeneil Española, a 24-year-old university student, was chosen from more than 60 entrants from across the country. Some were, as we expected, from big cities. But more than a few were from tiny places we had never heard of. As you will read in "Prairie Fire" (page 22), our in-house team of judges were impressed by the commitment, creativity and sophistication that many of the applicants demonstrated with their photos and written submissions. But we unanimously agreed that Española stood a Gucci-scarved head above the rest. He was exactly what we were looking for: a true devotee who loves thrifting so much that they would do it even if they had money to burn.

With second-hand shopping so much on our minds, we figured the time was right for a guide to some of Canada's best sources. Isabel B. Slone shares her top picks in "Hometown Haul" (page 26) but admits that her love of thrifting has waned in recent years ("Thrift Shift," page 30). The problem? True treasures are harder to find amid the vast amount of fast fashion that is choking the resale market. And while throwaway clothing from brands such as Fashion Nova and Shein is clearly a problem, Odessa Paloma Parker wonders why the sports world isn't being called out for its bad behaviour ("Game Misconduct," page 34). The worst of it is the championship merchandise that is made for both teams in the finals, as the loser's caps and T-shirts are discarded.

Thankfully, there are fashion people with a conscience, including our cover star, Aurora James ("Wild at Heart," page 68). The Canadian-born designer has made social responsibility the core of her accessories brand, Brother Vellies. In the wake of the George Floyd murder, she took on a new mission, urging major retailers to commit 15 per cent of their shelf space to Black-owned businesses. Since then, her Fifteen Percent Pledge has become one of the fastest-growing social-justice non-profit organizations while redirecting $10 billion in revenue to BIPOC-owned brands. In her upcoming book, *Wildflower: A Memoir*, James details how she went from dropping out of high school and getting kicked out of university to being named one of *Time*'s 100 Most Influential People of 2021 and one of *Glamour*'s Women of the Year in 2022.

And if you are still not inspired enough, turn to page 52 to meet Gabe Adams-Wheatley ("Busy Body"). The TikToker was born with no limbs, yet he has built a following of more than four million with his beauty demos and dance moves. "People are always going to tell you that you can't," he tells Paloma Parker. "But you can. And the 'sky' is not the limit—*you* create your limits." If Adams-Wheatley, with his profound challenges, can be so positive, surely the rest of us can, too.

Bernadette

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PHOTOGRAPHY AND STYLING BY GEORGE ANTONOPOULOS. TOP, $1,020, AND SKIRT, $1,180, MARIE SAINT PIERRE. SHOES, $45, EARRINGS, $15, AND RINGS (RIGHT), $50 EACH, H&M. RING (LEFT), MORRA'S OWN.

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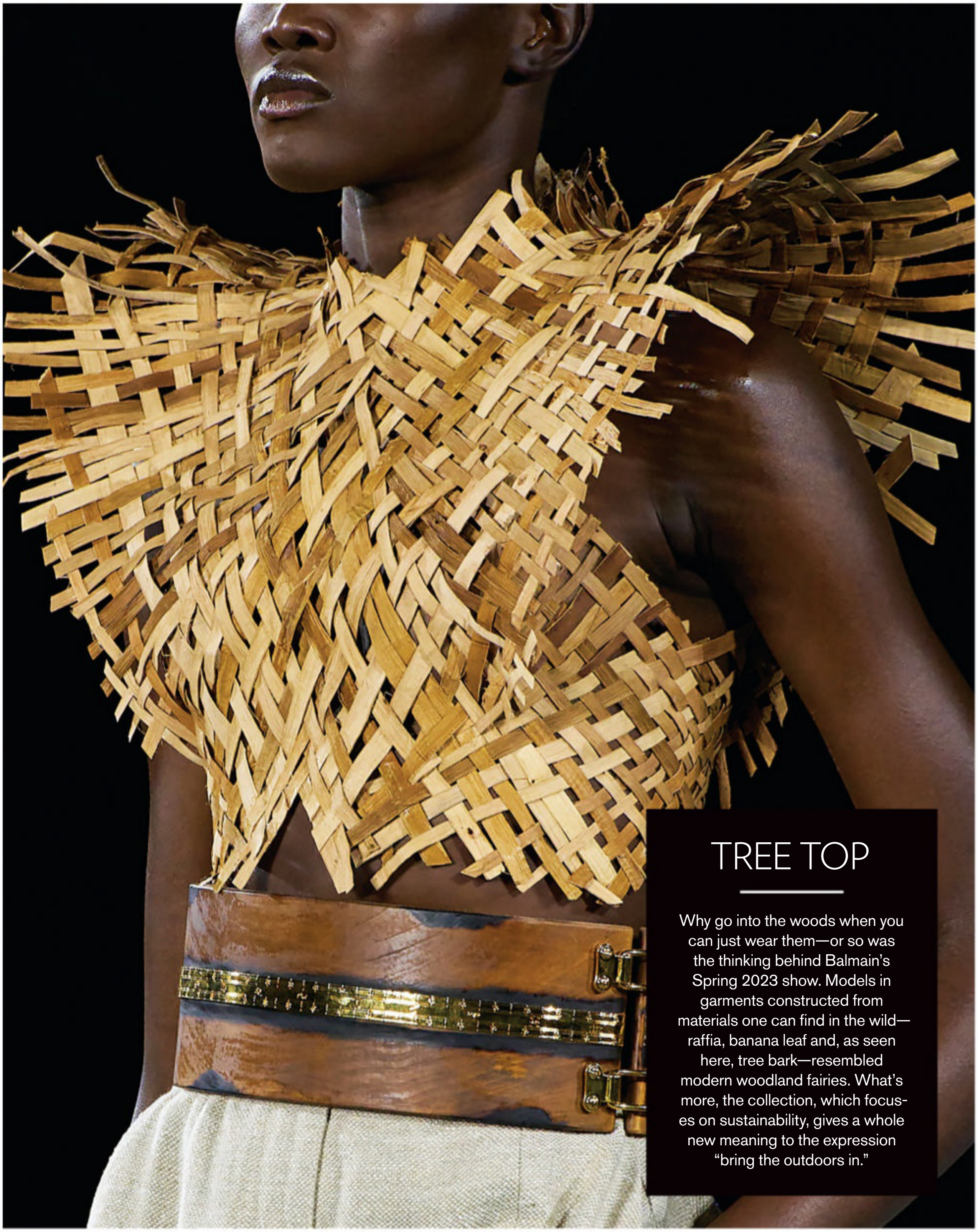
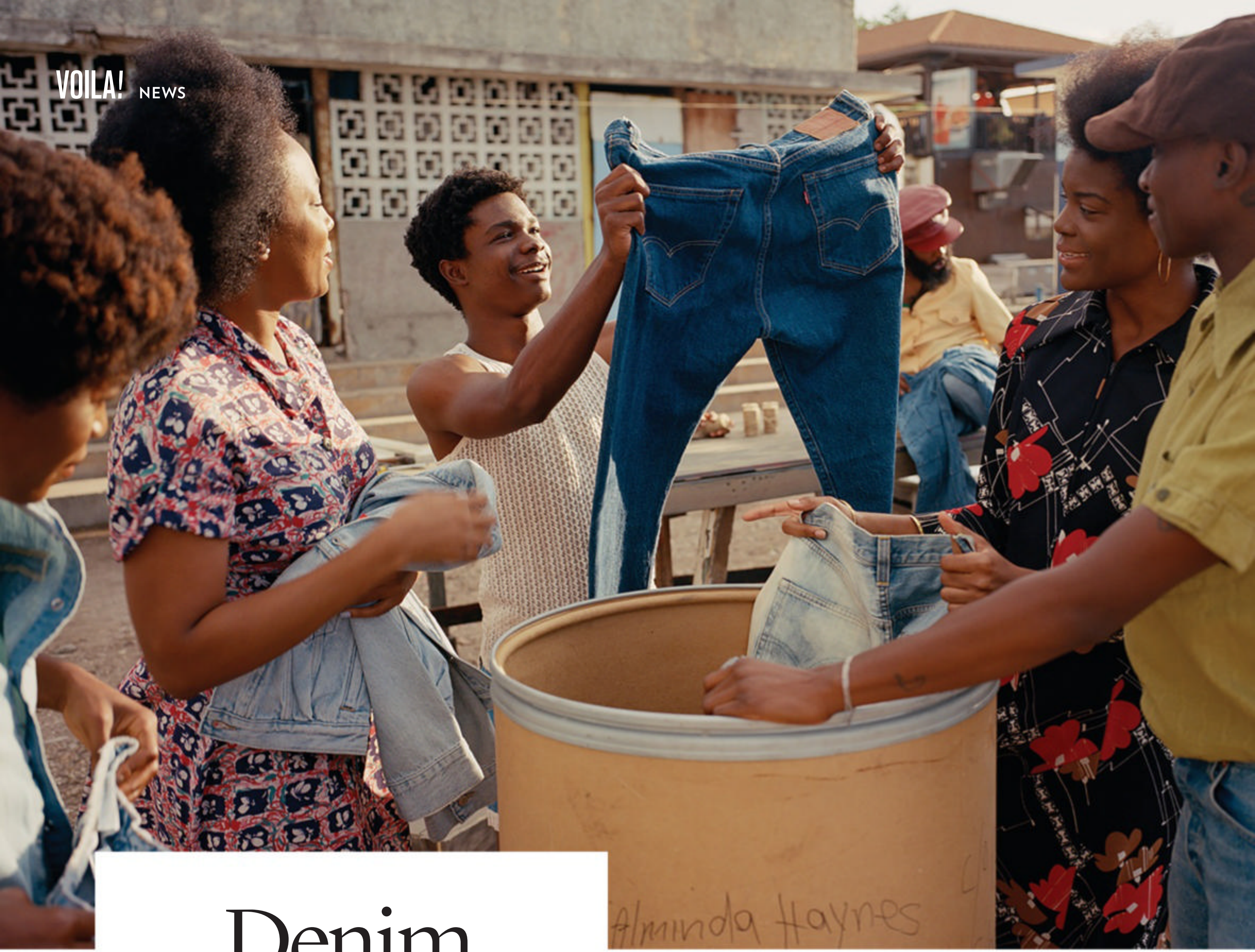


TREE TOP

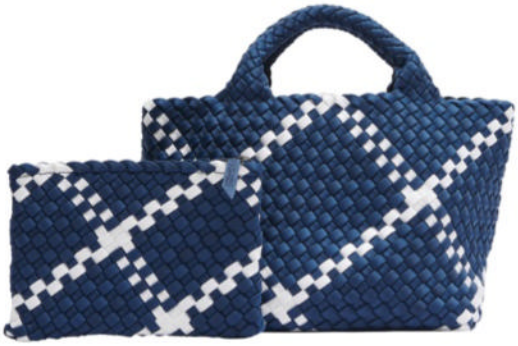
Why go into the woods when you can just wear them—or so was the thinking behind Balmain's Spring 2023 show. Models in garments constructed from materials one can find in the wild—raffia, banana leaf and, as seen here, tree bark—resembled modern woodland fairies. What's more, the collection, which focuses on sustainability, gives a whole new meaning to the expression "bring the outdoors in."

TEXT BY ANNIKA LAUTENS. PHOTOGRAPHY VIA LAUNCHMETRICS.COM/SPOTLIGHT.



Denim Days

With apologies to the Greek philosopher Heraclitus, the only real constant in life is jeans—specifically Levi's 501 jeans. They've been a stylish staple since 1873, and 150 years later, the beloved blue bottoms are showing no signs of extinction. So in honour of its sesquicentennial anniversary, the brand has kicked off its Greatest Story Ever Worn campaign with the release of three short films, directed by Martin de Thurah and Melina Matsoukas, celebrating the colourful history and defining legacy of Levi's 501 jeans. Also in the pipeline? A variety of updated denim styles and partnerships with Barbie Ferreira and Emma Chamberlain will continue the celebration well into the year.

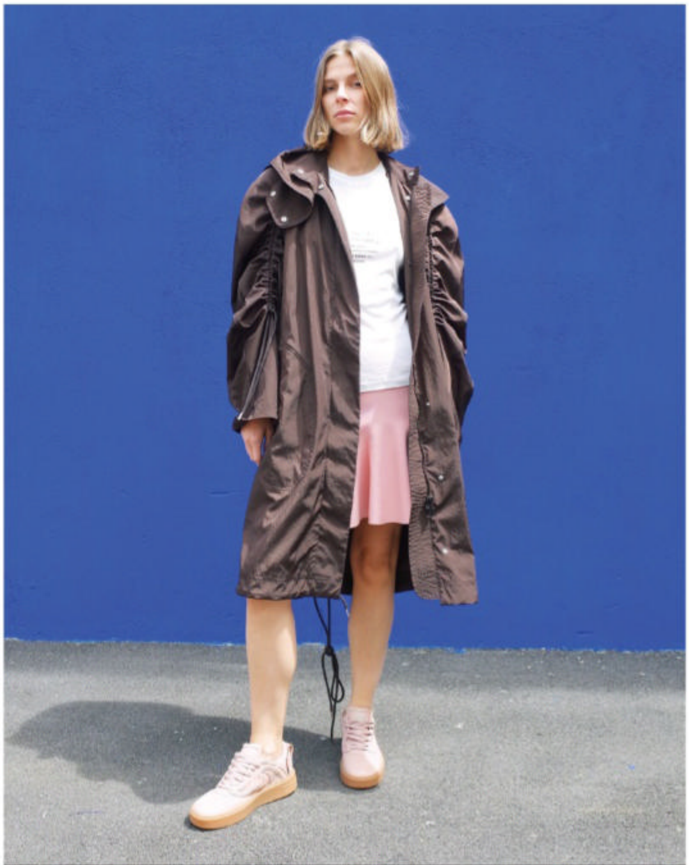


WEAVE IT OUT Woven bags are a spring staple, so why not choose a more sustainable option this season? Enter Toronto's T. Line and New York's Naghedi, who have teamed up to create a tote made entirely by hand and from leftover fabric. While fans of both brands will be quick to clock that the collaboration combines the Canadian label's signature white cotton with the American's navy neoprene, these bags are sure to appeal to anyone who's looking to adopt an "I just came from the farmers' market" laissez-faire attitude—even if they've only been to the grocery store.

BEYOND THE SEA Don't let these streamlined silhouettes fool you—there's more to Tentree's new SeaBlend collection than meets the eye. While the Canadian brand is known for its reforestation efforts (it plants 10 trees for every purchase), Tentree has now set its sights on supporting the sea by sowing kelp in high-risk areas like Kenya, Vancouver Island and Florida. What's more, the actual clothes are made from recycled bottles. Sustainable *and* stylish.

★ TIKTOK HOT TAKE: @HAVRESTUDIO ★

To suit or not to suit—that's not a question in 2023, especially according to Havre Studio, the Mexico-based brand that upcycles vintage menswear into trendy two-pieces for women. Get your formalwear fix on TikTok, where Danish founder Madeleine Frandsen uses the account @havrestudio to share BTS clips of her process and spotlight famous fans like Hailey Bieber, Emily Ratajkowski and Matilda Djerf. Whether you prefer a pinstriped skirt set or a two-tone blazer, you'll be sure to find your strong suit (pun intended).

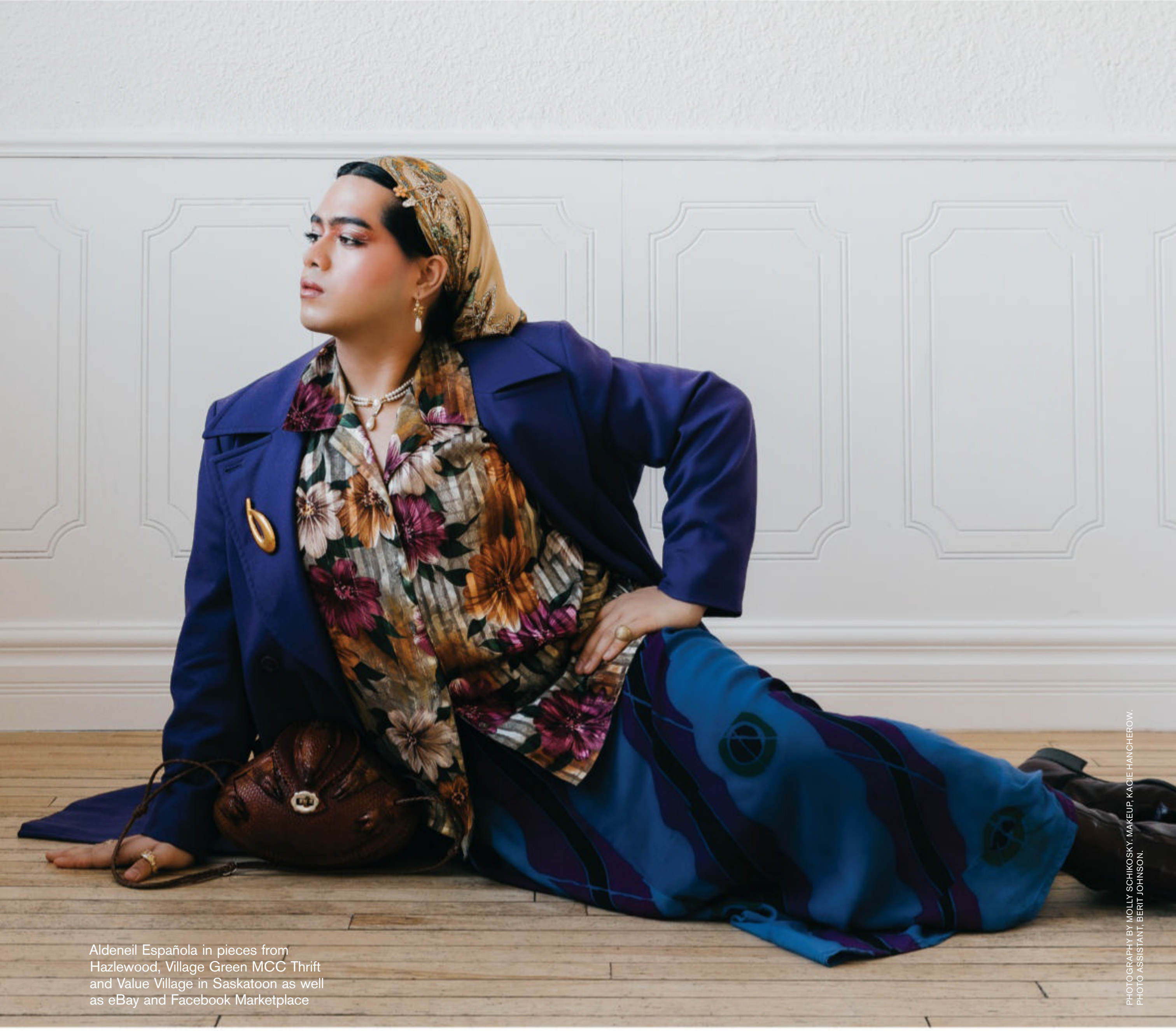


GIVE & TAKE

Stella McCartney wants you to give back your jacket—seriously, it does. As part of its Spring 2023 collection, the sustainable luxury brand has designed the new Econyl Parka with regenerated and regenerable nylon. What makes this material so special is that once the owner is done wearing the garment, they can return it to the retailer so the fabric can be recycled into something new. Who says old clothes can't learn new tricks?

TEXT BY ANNIKA LAUTENS. PHOTOGRAPHY: (THIS PAGE) TENTREE COURTESY OF TENTREE; STELLA MCCARTNEY COURTESY OF STELLA MCCARTNEY; HAVRE STUDIO VIA INSTAGRAM/@HAVRESTUDIO; (OPPOSITE PAGE) LEVI'S COURTESY OF LEVI'S; T. LINE AND NAGHEDI BY PATRICK MARCOUX.

Prairie Fire

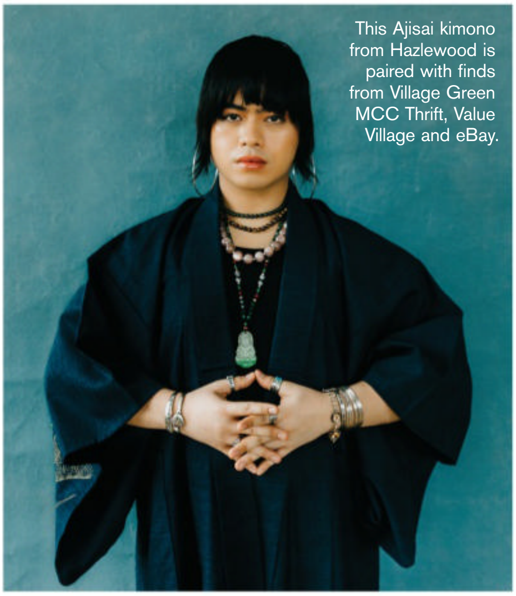


Aldeneil Española in pieces from Hazlewood, Village Green MCC Thrift and Value Village in Saskatoon as well as eBay and Facebook Marketplace

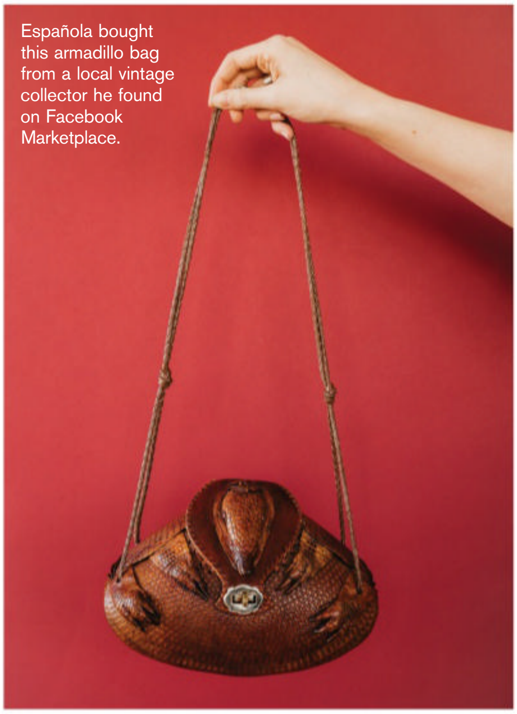
PHOTOGRAPHY BY MOLLY SCHIKOSKY. MAKEUP, KACIE HANCHEROW.
PHOTO ASSISTANT, BERIT JOHNSON.

After a countrywide search, *FASHION* has declared Aldeneil Española of Saskatoon Canada's Most Stylish Thrifter.

By **BERNADETTE MORRA**



This Ajisai kimono from Hazlewood is paired with finds from Village Green MCC Thrift, Value Village and eBay.



Española bought this armadillo bag from a local vintage collector he found on Facebook Marketplace.

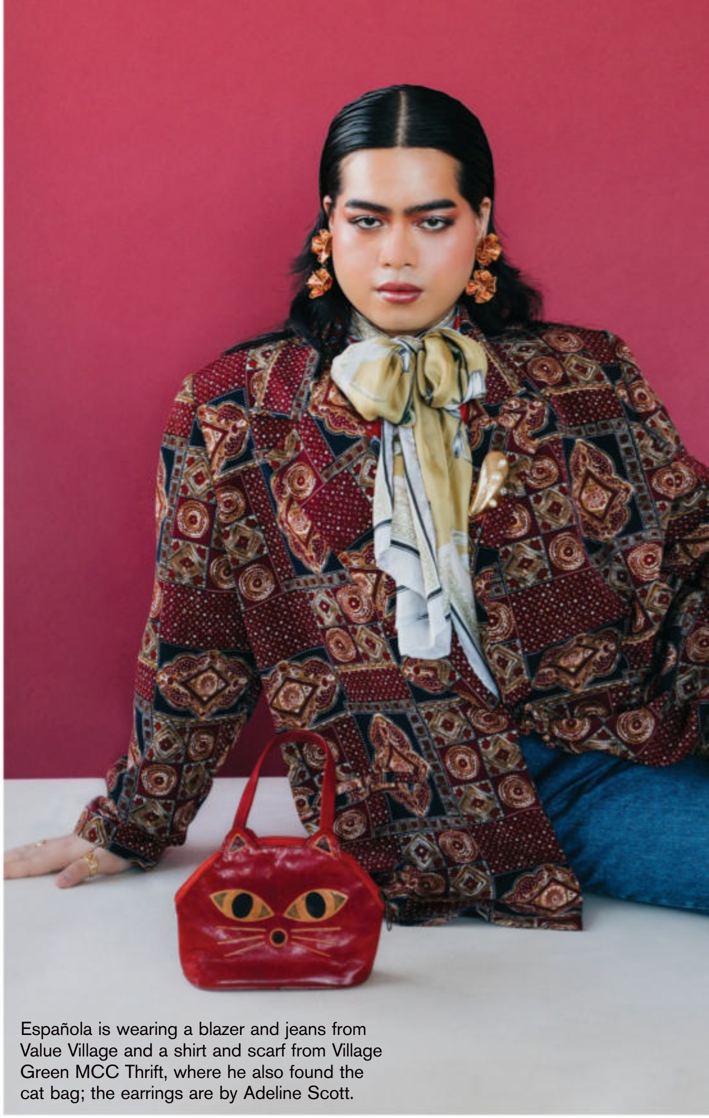
WHEN *FASHION* EMBARKED on a search for Canada's Most Stylish Thrifter, we had no idea of what might unfold. Would any "serious fashion people" apply? Would all the submissions come from big cities? And from influencers looking to boost their followers? We knew what we wanted: a true thrifting devotee. Not someone who is trying to dress designer on the cheap. Not a second-hand-shop clerk who has dibs on all the best goods. We wanted a person who enjoys the hunting process, who is discerning when it comes to quality and who doesn't care what name is on the label. We were also looking for creativity: someone who would surprise us with how they put their finds together. And definitely someone who loves thrifting so much that they would do it even if they had the disposable income to shop entirely new.

We found all of that and more in Aldeneil Española, a 24-year-old university student in Saskatoon. His submission—which included a full-on fashion shoot inspired by Frida Kahlo, among others—put him at the top of a very impressive list of entrants from across the country. But what set Española apart was his artistic eye and deep connection to what he wears.

"Clothes are so much more than just fabric covering the body," Española wrote in his application. "I am a queer POC artist who uses clothing to tell stories. Clothing is one of the quickest ways to communicate who you are without uttering a single word. I hope to show the younger generations behind me that it's important to be visible and that clothing can be an extension of your personality and being."

When I meet Española on Zoom, he is dressed in a vibrant floral shirt from Value Village that seems better suited to a beach in Maui than his small apartment in sub-zero Saskatoon. His cheeks are glowing thanks to a combo of Fenty Beauty and E.L.F. blushes and Fenty Beauty Diamond Bomb highlighter. He describes how he began thrifting menswear and then shifted to the women's aisles. "My earliest women's find was a fur coat with the label, the year and who the coat was made for," he says. "I felt like I had a connection to the person who wore it and I was carrying on their legacy. That was a big shift in my mind." Española also began to see the value in vintage clothing, which was made to last, as opposed to the fast fashion that fills so many thrift-store racks. "I love the feel of vintage leather," he says. Among his treasures is an armadillo bag, complete with head and feet, »

These Calvin Klein boots from the Raf Simons era were Española's first luxury score.



Española is wearing a blazer and jeans from Value Village and a shirt and scarf from Village Green MCC Thrift, where he also found the cat bag; the earrings are by Adeline Scott.

that he carries like a football because of its shape: "I have never seen anything like this, and it probably cost way more than what I had to spend for it." The first designer item he thrifted was a pair of Calvin Klein boots from the Raf Simons era that he wouldn't have been able to afford otherwise.

As Española shares his story, it becomes clear that at one time he dressed for necessity, not personal expression. Born in the Philippines, he was 12 when he landed with his family in the tiny town of Gravelbourg, Sask. "It was the middle of nowhere and we didn't have a lot coming into Canada," he recalls. "We arrived in March, so it was still pretty cold. The Filipinos in that community gathered a lot of second-hand clothes, coats and stuff—things we didn't need when we were in the Philippines because it's always hot."

There was little "fashion" in Gravelbourg, population 986, or among Española's very conservative churchgoing family. "I definitely just dressed to fit in," he says. But that first experience of wearing only second-hand clothing had a profound impact. "It opened my eyes to the possibility that it's literally fine for me not to have anything new," he shares. When Española moved to Saskatoon at age 19, he continued to thrift but began to notice a difference in how people dressed. Social media expanded his world even further, and that, combined with the freedom to break away from his parents' constraints, ignited a passion for experimentation. Around the same time, Española saw a documentary on Alexander McQueen that confirmed what he had already been sensing. "McQueen was the first person who showed me that clothing can be an art form and a visual language," he says. "And that really inspired me to explore this part of myself."

PHOTOGRAPHY BY MOLLY SCHIKOSKY. MAKEUP, KACIE HANCHEROW. PHOTO ASSISTANT, BERIT JOHNSON.

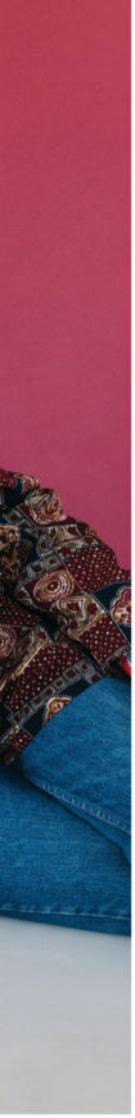
Thrift Tips

1. "I don't shop online a lot unless I'm looking for a specific piece. Clothing acts differently on different bodies. You need to be able to try it on to see if it lies properly, if it moves the way you want it to move."

2. "Feel the fabric with your hands, and then try the item on. The more senses you bring to clothes, the more you'll appreciate and understand them."

3. "I wear basics that cling to my skin so it's easier to try clothes on overtop. It also feels better to wear something underneath as you don't know where the clothes have been."

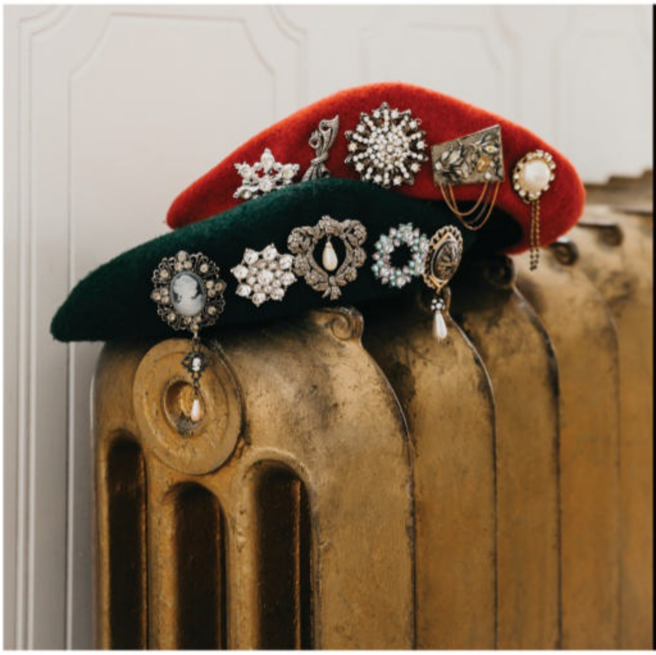
4. "Travel light. I sometimes bring my own grocery bags and maybe a handbag. Other than that, I rarely carry anything."



It was also the beginning of his path to self-confidence. “Fashion was the first place I saw evidence that I was good at something,” he says. “And then I thought I could apply that same principle to other forms of art.” Española is now in his second year of a fine arts degree, and he often shares his expressive drawings on Instagram and TikTok, interspersing them with the fashion shoots he collaborates on with other Saskatoon creatives. He is also part of a stylish small group counted on to bring energy to brand events and parties. “This helped me have endless belief in myself,” he declares. “I know that no matter what I want to do, I will always be there to catch myself and bring myself back up.”

Española would love to find a way to combine his passions by creating wearable art and is experimenting with prints, dead stock and painting on blazers. Turning found fashion into art is just one of the reasons he believes thrifting will always have a place in his life. The other is his unapologetically exuberant style. “Clothing costs a lot of money, and thrifting is a really good way for me to be able to create extravagant maximalist looks without going broke.” ■

Española in a blazer, jeans and bag from Value Village, a printed shirt from eBay and a white shirt by an artisan in the Philippines; the Calvin Klein boots were purchased on Grailed.



THE BERETS

“I was a cadet from age 12 to 19. Cadets have these summer camps where it turned out a lot of the people were queer and just wanted to get out of the house and away from their parents, which was really hilarious to me. So imagine: We were all hitting puberty and practising military drills and survival techniques, but outside of that, we were talking and realizing ‘Wait, you’re gay? I’m gay, too!’ The first time I came out, it was to my barracks, and they were like, ‘Yeah, OK, whatever.’ That’s when I realized there were people who were OK with it. I thought, ‘How do I queer-ify this experience?’ So I started collecting brooches and sewing them on my beret.”

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5. “I’m not very fun to go shopping with. I’m very specific, and I need to think. I can’t be having a conversation with someone. So I like to do it alone.”

6. “I prefer it when there are less people in the store, so I go in the evening. It’s usually the only thing on my agenda as I like to take my time to look through the whole store. No time constraints makes the experience more enjoyable.”

7. “Staff in smaller stores are more likely to strike up a conversation. This way, I’ve found pieces that are not yet on the floor. Even though a store is filled, they likely have more stock in the back.”

8. “It’s powerful if you can do alterations. That’s how I got into sewing. I hem pants and take in shirts, and I’ve reconstructed thrifted pieces for other people, usually to make them fit.”

HOMETOWN HAUL

Isabel B. Slone has scoured the country to bring you some of the most under-the-radar vintage and second-hand stores in Canada that are sure to give you the thrill of the find.

COMMON SORT

Common Sort

COMMONSORT

LOCATION: Toronto
SPECIALTY: Trendy fast-fashion and designer-label gems
WHY WE ♥ IT: Like most consignment stores, Common Sort can be a grab bag when it comes to style, catering to both Gen Z Y2K enthusiasts and designer snobs alike. Despite the disparate racks, what everything has in common is an affordable price tag; high-quality vintage pieces can be had for less than $30, and designer items rarely go for more than $100. With three different locations across Toronto—each catering to its unique neighbourhood locale—Common Sort will fulfill any bargain hunter's bloodhound-like nose for a deal.

Stella Luna

LOCATION: Toronto
SPECIALTY: Pristine rare 1960s vintage
WHY WE ♥ IT: Open only two days a week, Stella Luna is perhaps Toronto's best-kept vintage secret. Owner Crispian Underwood has been hawking Oleg Cassini blouses and sleek alligator pumps to discerning Torontonians since the mid-'90s from her west-Parkdale storefront with its celestial motifs painted on dusty-orange walls. Prices are scandalously affordable; a stunning 1960s beaded cardigan clocks in at only $30. Ask nicely and Underwood may let you into her treasure trove of a basement for a peek.

STELLA LUNA

Mintage Mall

MINTAGEMALL

LOCATION: Vancouver
SPECIALTY: Novelty graphic tees and perfectly-worn-in denim
WHY WE ♥ IT: As the name suggests, Mintage Mall is a mall full of vintage. Located in Vancouver's Mount Pleasant neighbourhood, it houses wares from some of the city's most reputable vintage sellers under a single roof. You'll find Billy Joel concert tees among kitschy salt and pepper shakers, sports jerseys, wedding dresses and much more spread out over several floors. With its penchant for ironic novelty items, it caters to a younger audience, but root around for an afternoon and you may leave with something wholly unexpected. Also, keep an eye out for the $20-or-less sales!

Seconde Vintage

SECONDE.VINTAGE

LOCATION: Montreal
SPECIALTY: Designer clothes in bold, brazen silhouettes
WHY WE ♥ IT: Opened in 2021, Seconde Vintage is a newcomer to Montreal's brimming second-hand-store scene. Its well-curated selection of high-end vintage makes it the perfect place for anyone who wants to find pristine Prada pumps without looking too hard. The inside is jam-packed with unexpected and quirky pieces from Thierry Mugler, Chanel, Issey Miyake and The Row that you might not find anywhere else. Some of the *outré* styles on offer are not for the faint of heart, but a statement piece or two will elevate your wardrobe to the next level. »

PHOTOGRAPHY: (THIS PAGE) MINTAGE MALL VIA INSTAGRAM/@MINTAGEMALL; SECONDE VINTAGE COURTESY OF SECONDE VINTAGE; (OPPOSITE PAGE) COMMON SORT COURTESY OF COMMON SORT.

Collective Will

SHOPCOLLECTIVEWILL

LOCATION: Vancouver
SPECIALTY: A covetable designer handbag selection
WHY WE ♥ IT: Shopping at Collective Will is like going to a clothing swap with your most stylish friends. The sunny, light-filled boutique in Vancouver's historic Gastown district boasts the city's most impressive selection of vintage and second-hand designer goods, including an abundance of Prada, Furla and Gucci bags. Most of the offerings are fairly pricey, but the store has frequent markdowns to clear out space, so with enough patience, you can snag a great deal on something you love. Perhaps the best news of all? They ship online orders worldwide.

Boretski Gallery

BORETSKIGALLERY

LOCATION: Belleville, Ont.
SPECIALTY: Antique accessories and jazzy formalwear
WHY WE ♥ IT: Owner Marina Boretski's crowded downtown-Belleville shop is ripe with treasures, and she often lends out her unique wares to wardrobe and prop stylists for use on Netflix shows. Dazzling 1920s evening gowns, lace bonnets from the Victorian era and 1950s cotton swimsuits are all items you might stumble upon while combing the racks. Boretski, whose boutique has been open since 2003, has an encyclopedic knowledge of her stock and can help locate pieces you might have missed on your first pass through the store.

Swish Vintage

SWISHYGIRL

LOCATION: Edmonton

SPECIALTY: Flirty, femme vintage dresses

WHY WE ♥ IT: In a city not typically known for its stylistic prowess, Swish Vintage is a rare gem. Owner Angela Larson is a self-described "treasure hunter, storyteller and stylist" who has been uniting special items with their rightful owners for 20 years. (The name comes from Larson's grandmother, a fashionista who used to describe stylish people as "so swish.") The store specializes in the feminine and eclectic: Jackie O. dresses from the 1960s hang on racks next to floral cotton dresses from the 1980s. Some finds—like a custom-made leopard-print three-piece skirt suit from the 1960s ($395)—must be seen to be believed.

La Petite Boutique/ The Little Shop

THELITTLESHOPMTL

LOCATION: Montreal

SPECIALTY: Antique textiles and costume-y clothes

WHY WE ♥ IT: Located outside of Montreal's crowded vintage scene, La Petite Boutique may be the most beloved *friperie* (French for "thrift store") of them all. Spanning three floors, the crowded shop boasts an eclectic array of handmade quilts stacked all the way up to the ceilings and a hodgepodge of hats. Nearly everyone who goes in—from puff-sleeved-prairie-dress lovers to ironic e-girls—will find something to satisfy their sensibilities. And lucky shoppers may end up being treated to a tray of tea and cookies in the afternoon by store owner Jill Moroz.

Elsie's Used Clothing

ELSIESCLOTHING

LOCATION: Halifax

SPECIALTY: Quirky high-end jumble sale

WHY WE ♥ IT: With its canary-yellow exterior and racks of clothing enticing customers to come inside, Elsie's Used Clothing is a mainstay on Halifax's Queen Street. The interior looks like the dressing room of a quirky aunt, with walls covered in vintage tapestries, thrift store framed photos and hangers displaying some of the frothier wares. You'll find an assortment of luxury goods, like a 1980s Balenciaga purse ($350) and a vintage fur-collar coat ($280), at standard (read "not cheap") vintage prices. Head there soon because the building is slated for demolition sometime in 2024. ■

PHOTOGRAPHY: (THIS PAGE) SWISH VINTAGE VIA INSTAGRAM/@SWISHYGIRL; LA PETITE BOUTIQUE/THE LITTLE SHOP COURTESY OF JILL MOROZ; ELSIE'S USED CLOTHING VIA INSTAGRAM/@ELSIESCLOTHING; (OPPOSITE PAGE) COLLECTIVE WILL COURTESY OF RANDA SALLOUM; BORETSKI GALLERY COURTESY OF BORETSKI GALLERY.

YAMAHA
DELTABOX
EXU

Thrift Shift

#thrifter currently has nearly 200 million views on TikTok. But as second-hand shopping comes to a crescendo, **Isabel B. Slone** argues that the golden era of vintage is long gone.

I fell out of love with thrifting in the same way that going bankrupt was described in Ernest Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises*: slowly at first, then all at once. In high school, I spent hours sifting through racks of old garments in the musty volunteer-run second-hand store in my hometown of Belleville, Ont. Tucked among the faded scrubs and cast-off Tim Hortons uniforms were gems like 1980s sequined mohair sweaters, creased leather Salvatore Ferragamo pumps and hand-knit Irish-wool cardigans with wooden buttons—each for less than $5.

For me, the bounty represented not just an accession of style but an escape from the confines of social class. When I was growing up, my mom sewed most of my wardrobe herself, which at the time marked me as someone unable to afford brand-name labels. But at the thrift store, I could find Lacoste sweaters and vintage Armani suits for less than a pair of jeans at the Gap. All of a sudden, I was dressing better than my classmates. The entire world opened up when I no longer had to choose between quantity and quality. Over

PHOTOGRAPHY: STREET STYLE VIA LAUNCHMETRICS.COM/SPOTLIGHT; TEXTURES VIA ISTOCK.

countless hours—no doubt at least the 10,000 that Malcolm Gladwell says are required to achieve true expertise—I developed a truffle-pig-like ability to spot treasures, like made-in-England vintage Dr. Martens and Brooks Brothers button-downs. Apparently, all it takes to look expensive is to have a good eye.

While I still love thrifting in theory, in practice, the fluorescent overhead lighting has begun to feel less like a symbol of promise and more like a harbinger of doom. Nowadays, the overwhelming thought I get upon entering a thrift store is "How can I get out of here as soon as possible?" I used to be able to walk into a second-hand shop and stumble across a pair of knee-high made-in-Italy leather combat boots that fit perfectly for $20. Now, all I can find are pilling mall-brand knits and flammable halter tops from Fashion Nova or Shein that fall apart after three wears. After a few minutes of half-heartedly rifling through the crammed racks, I head to the housewares section, do a quick scan for Le Creuset and kitschy figurines and then leave.

This precipitous drop in inventory quality isn't because more people have caught on to thrifting—though according to a ThredUp study, the second-hand market is projected to experience more growth than any other clothing sector (including fast fashion) between now and 2031—it's because clothing brands have engaged in a race to the bottom with regard to garment construction in order to turn a profit. Clothing is one of the rare consumer categories that has actually decreased in price over the past 30 years, even with inflation. When a T-shirt costs less than a carton of eggs, you know there's a problem. Thrift stores are not just places where unwanted garments move on to their next stage of life; they're a graveyard where inferior clothing goes to die.

The reality is that thrifting has become such a poignant reminder of the dilemma of consumerism that I would rather avoid it altogether. Instead, I find joy in saving up to thoughtfully acquire new pieces from ethical independent designers.

That said, it isn't impossible to find good stuff while thrifting; it's just become much more difficult. If you know what you're looking for, you'll still be able to walk away with a few rare gems. Here's how to spot first-rate finery amid a sea of trash.

> **THE REALITY IS THAT THRIFTING HAS BECOME SUCH A POIGNANT REMINDER** OF THE DILEMMA OF CONSUMERISM THAT I WOULD RATHER AVOID IT ALTOGETHER.

AVOID SYNTHETICS Always keep your eyes peeled for items made from natural fibres like wool, cotton, silk and linen. Organic materials are often more breathable than synthetic ones, and they typically have a smaller eco footprint than materials made from petroleum by-products.

CHECK FABRIC QUALITY Designers refer to "the hand" to describe the sensation of a fabric against your skin. For example, how does it feel in your hand? Is the material silky and soft or slippery and staticky? The way a garment feels helps determine how often you will wear it, so be sure you like the fabric just as much as—or even more than—the style before putting it in your cart.

LEARN TO READ LABELS A clothing label provides almost as much information as a book—if you know how to read it. It can tell you the age of something, whether it's high- or low-end and where it was made—all important clues for determining a garment's quality. Clothing made before 1990 and items made in Italy, England, the United States and Canada tend to be valued for their superior quality (bonus points if the piece is union-made). Notice a designer label? Congratulations! You've hit the jackpot.

ASSESS THE WORKMANSHIP Examine the garment to see if there are any loose threads; if so, pull them to make sure the piece doesn't fall apart. Look at the stitching. Is it perfectly straight or wonky? If there's a pattern, does it line up at the seams? Cheaper-quality garments are usually held together by looping serged hems instead of stitched seams.

PRACTISE PATIENCE Thrifting isn't like heading to the mall and picking a shirt out of a lineup of acceptable options. Instead, try to have an open mind and allow yourself to be surprised. Keep an idea in your head of what you're looking for, but don't get discouraged if you don't find it immediately. Sometimes it takes years of searching before the Thrift Store Gods deliver on their promise. ■

Indigenous Ingenuity

4Kinship's Amy Denet Deal describes how her Diné tribe influences her designs.

By **ANNIKA LAUTENS**

Parachute bubble skirts, tie-dyed jumpsuits and colourfully collaged clothing are just a few examples of the whimsical wares you'll find on 4Kinship's website. Another common thread? The appearance of Indigenous founder Amy Denet Deal's daughter, Lily, who models almost all of her mother's masterpieces. "We have a very special relationship," shares Denet Deal, revealing that Lily inspired her to give up her fast-fashion job and start her sustainable brand. "When she was still little, I spent so much time teaching her how to be a conscious human and live a sustainable life," says Denet Deal. "So it seemed completely inauthentic to work at a corporation actively damaging the earth. I needed to be a better mom and live by example."

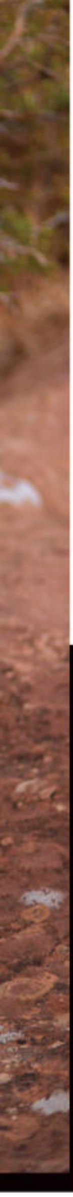
Shortly after the kickoff of 4Kinship (initially named Orenda Tribe), the duo moved from L.A. to New Mexico to reconnect with their Diné tribe, and the brand took full form from there. Fuelled by her desire to honour her heritage, Denet Deal infuses her Indigenous ethos into all aspects of her work, from collaborating with different artisans in her community to using sustainable practices like upcycling, hand-weaving and hand-dying vintage materials. "Indigenous peoples have always lived in harmony with the land, and we've always considered our impact on it," shares Denet Deal. "At 4Kinship, we continue the ancestral practice by reflecting that balance and harmony in our garments. We want people to see the clear connection to the land that goes into every piece."

Here, Denet Deal dives deeper into her Diné culture and why her daughter is her forever muse. ■

DINÉTAH

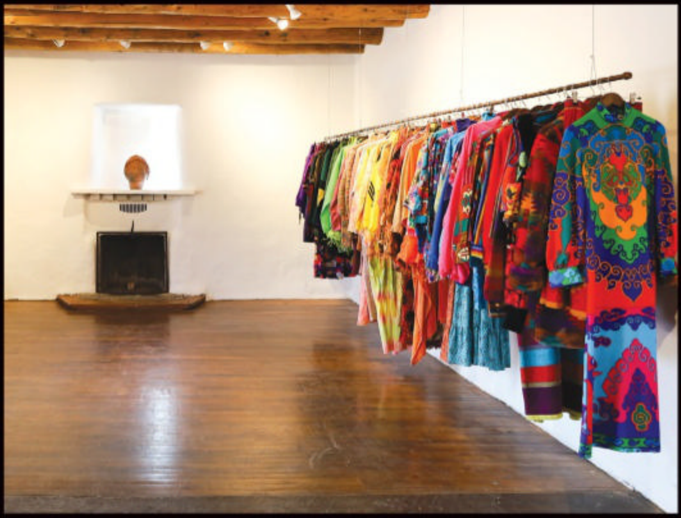
"Dinétah is the traditional homeland of the Diné tribe. I'm inspired by everything that surrounds me here in the Southwest—the clouds, the sky, the mountains, the land—which led me back to New Mexico and my roots."

PHOTOGRAPHY: (THIS PAGE) DENET DEAL BY DILLON SACHS; LANDSCAPE COURTESY OF 4KINSHIP; (OPPOSITE PAGE) LILY (TOP AND BOTTOM) COURTESY OF 4KINSHIP; 4KINSHIP HOUSE BY CHARLES MONTAYA; DENET DEAL BY SHAUN PRICE.



JEFFREY GIBSON

"American Mississippi Choctaw-Cherokee contemporary artist Jeffrey Gibson's work has changed my life. He's a Native American who did not grow up in a Native community but has created his own space of belonging through his work. I relate to his pieces and story on all levels."



FLIGHT SUITS

"I love utilitarian and gender-free clothing, so I live in upcycled vintage military flight suits. At 4Kinship, we invite many of these old souls back into our world and infuse them with the earth's and sky's colours using our hand dyes."

4KINSHIP HOUSE

"4Kinship House allows us to represent ourselves and encourage Indigenous creativity to flourish. We burn cedar every morning as we start the day, set intentions and constantly change the rhythm of each room."

HER DAUGHTER

"Lily's why I started 4Kinship—to set an example for my child on how a brand could honour our Indigeneity. We've grown together on our path toward sustainable fashion. She guides not only my aesthetic but also my life."

GAME MISCONDUCT

With its staggering stats about waste, fashion is seen as a climate culprit. But what about the overproduction of sports and entertainment merch?

By **ODESSA PALOMA PARKER**

PHOTOGRAPHY VIA TRUNK ARCHIVE

In the fall of 2019, I attended a panel discussion hosted by the British Fashion Council on the last day of London Fashion Week (LFW). Centred on the topic of sustainability and fashion, it included designer Phoebe English; model and environmental activist Arizona Muse; and Bel Jacobs, a former fashion editor who now works with the environmental protest group Extinction Rebellion. I was eager to hear what the informed and illustrious speakers had to say about how the industry can do its part by being more sustainably minded. (I've started using this phrase instead of the word "sustainable" since success is hard to measure or even define.)

I listened patiently while the usual factoids were listed off. You know the ones—like the 2018 study stating that the fashion industry contributes to around 10 per cent of all greenhouse gas emissions. But when Jacobs, in an effort to stop the promotion of wasteful practices, called for an end to LFWs, it gave me pause, prompting me to raise my hand during the Q&A period and ask "Are there any plans to call for a boycott of the Super Bowl?"

My query seemed to catch some of the panellists off guard, and some anger churned within me when it was essentially deflected and redirected back to the evils of the fashion industry. When talking about my feelings post-event with others who weren't in attendance, I was occasionally met with churlish astonishment that I got this upset over the fact that fashion seems to bear the brunt of our climate-crisis activism when the sports industry, for example, is supremely environmentally damaging as well. Or, folks were gobsmacked that they hadn't thought much about the inconsistency at all.

It's easy to see why that is: It's a generally unpopular observation. Since the sustainability conversation is anchored by alarming statistics, here's one for your consideration: As of this writing, Google Trends reported that searches for "sustainability fashion" happen nearly five times more frequently than searches for "sustainability sports"—and that's just one industry other than fashion that you could choose. There's also entertainment (which was meagre by comparison, with one-twelfth of the search power), automotive and travel, to name a few. The variety of climate-crisis villains is vast, yet the outrage directed toward them is palpably sparser.

I'm galled by this discrepancy because not only am I a "fashion person"—via both vocation and a personal investment in vestiary self-expression since childhood—but my interest in the concept of sustainability and design has made me realize that intersectionality and scope-broadening are important. To put it another way, I'm weary of standing outside a house that's on fire (the earth, in this case) and focusing wholly on one method of putting it out when there are plenty at our disposal.

When I hear a statistic like the aforementioned about the fashion industry's emissions, it makes me wonder: What's the breakdown when it comes to garments crafted by someone like Phoebe English versus those by a company like Shein? Or, to the point of this story, are we going to continue pretending that this number doesn't include the creation of sports gear for both players and fans? And what about uniforms for fast-food employees and medical scrubs? If all apparel falls under the category "fashion," why is the fashion industry solely taking the blame?

And where are the venomous TikToks—an all-too-common form of commentary lobbed at the great big "fashion bogeyperson" on the daily—about the tens of millions of meat products sold at sporting events every season when we know that a study released last year found that 60 per cent of greenhouse gas emissions are caused by animal agriculture? (I can't recall a time I was given a red hot—let alone asked to pay an exorbitant price for one—during LFW, FWIW.)

FASHION IS INCREASINGLY AN **ECHO CHAMBER** AND **OUTLET** FOR OUR **EXISTENTIAL** ANGST.

Unlike with fashion events, at any given moment of the day across the entire world, sports are being played both professionally and at an amateur level. Players need uniforms, and spectators are buying everything from food to foam fingers. On top of that, consider that for every championship game played, clothing and other paraphernalia are created with the expectation that one team is going to win.

What happens to the losing team's commodities? The website Mental Floss attempted to answer this question in a story that includes a staggering stat about the 2007 Super Bowl: "Based on strong sales after the Chicago Bears' 2007 NFC Championship win…Sports Authority printed more than 15,000 shirts proclaiming a Bears Super Bowl victory well before the game even started. And then the Colts beat the Bears, 29–17." After reading the entire article, though, I came away from it feeling like we're all losers here because what follows these lines is a photo of a group of smiling children wearing much-too-large sports jerseys that were donated to them by the evangelical Christian organization World Vision, which previously facilitated the distribution of unused products from suppliers to communities in need around the world.

Now, you've likely heard of markets and landfills, particularly in the Global South, that are choked with garment and accessories castoffs from countries like Canada and the United States. I see it posted about vigorously alongside calls to reframe our consumption of fashion goods. But, to date, I have never seen this reality dissected by way of a cleverly designed infographic social post with regard to sports swag or the promotional spoils that come with blockbuster movies, the latest Netflix releases or concert tours. That photo truly crystallized what I've been feeling this entire time when it comes to where we lay the blame of waste as well as what we do with it.

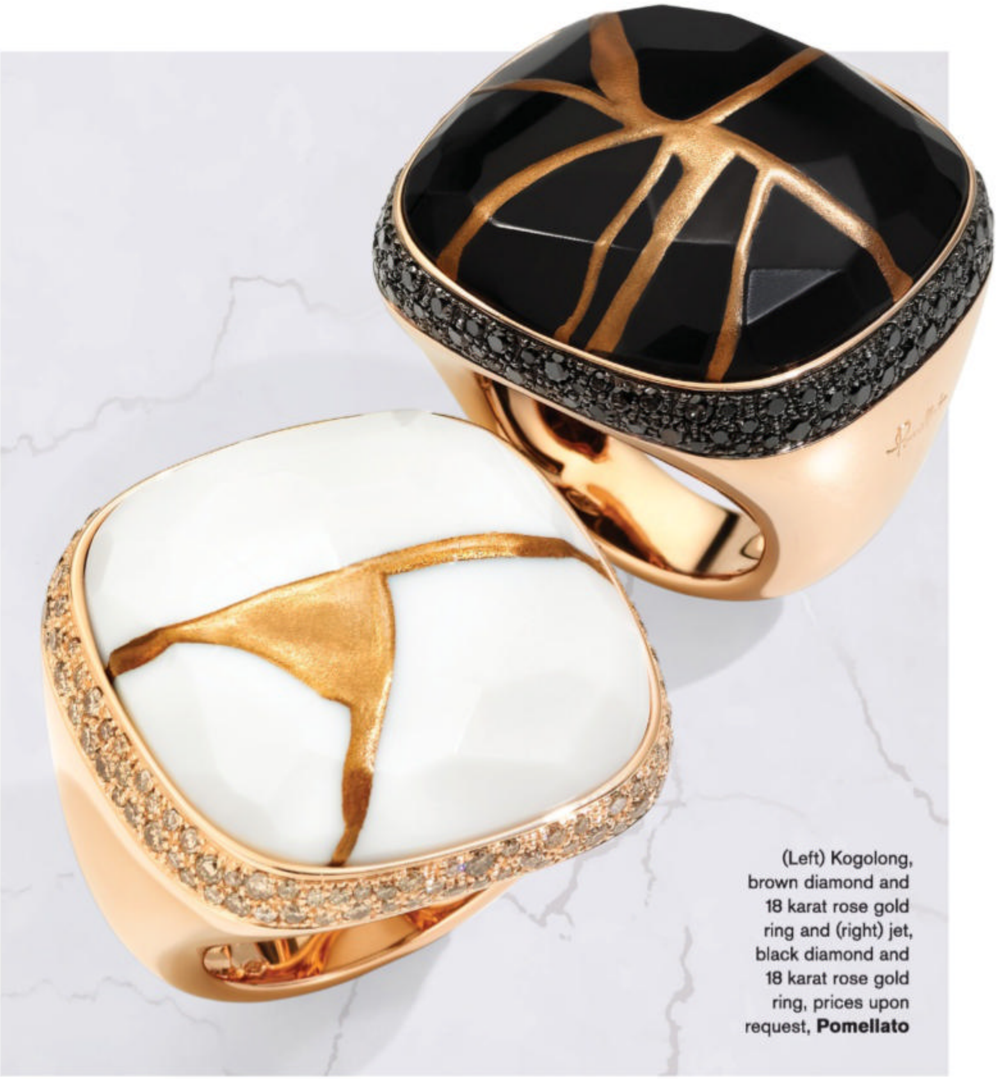
I can only speculate as to why this compartmentalizing, or sheer, wilful ignorance, is a reality. Part of my supposition comes from knowing that fashion's reputation as an allegedly protective domain for women and members of the LGBTQIA2S+ community makes it an easy target for undue scrutiny in the distressingly bigoted world we live in.

It's also seen as frivolous—by many people for multiple reasons—despite what a lot of us know about its ability to help us manifest our inner selves to the world or unite us by community or subculture. And perhaps most importantly, sports and entertainment—specifically the kind that requires energy-sucking productions and rampant global travel—are industries that have been designed to alleviate our daily dismay. We don't think about our anxiety or depression when we're watching "our team" win a game. Such distractions are salves for the trials and tribulations of the human condition.

But fashion, especially nowadays, is increasingly an echo chamber and outlet for our existential angst. Whether it's Balenciaga's snow-covered runways or the brands that launch on the daily touting a new miracle textile du jour, the industry has unfortunately attempted to right wrongs by creating more hype and more products. But at the very least, there's some self-—and communal—awareness about how much needs to change in this sphere. I cannot say the same for the Super Bowl. ■

JEWELLERY 101 KINTSUGI

By **CLARA YOUNG**



(Left) Kogolong, brown diamond and 18 karat rose gold ring and (right) jet, black diamond and 18 karat rose gold ring, prices upon request, **Pomellato**

I've lost the ability to throw anything away. It's not because I'm a hoarder. It's because I can no longer toss out broken bowls and unravelling sweaters with the prelapsarian abandon of yore. So, down into the basement they go until I figure out how to repair them.

While in this salvaging frame of mind, I noticed a rivulet of gold on an old brown espresso cup after dinner at a friend's place. The cup looked like it had had a mini volcanic eruption. Gleaming 24-karat "magma" slithered down from the rim in a meandering diagonal. My friend, a ceramic artist, said: "It's bootleg kintsugi. The cup was cracked so I just mixed some gold powder with epoxy and glued it back together." Had any masters of the 15th-century Japanese art form been at the table, they would have spit out their tea. But to the rest of us, who didn't know any better, gold glue made for a nifty repair job.

"Kintsugi" means "to join with gold." As the legend goes, a shogun named Ashikaga Yoshimasa's favourite celadon-glazed bowl was broken so he sent it to China to be repaired. What returned was a Frankenstein-style mend job held together with metal staples. Yoshimasa ordered his own people to come up with a better patching technique.

Thus was born kintsugi—a slow-as-molasses fix that uses gold-dusted urushi lacquer to glue broken pieces of pottery together. The lacquer is made from the sap of the *Toxicodendron vernicifluum* tree, a member of the sumac family, which grows in Japan, China and Korea. Urushi trees are finicky and can only be harvested when they are between 10 and 12 years old. Each tree produces

PHOTOGRAPHY: MAIN COURTESY OF POMELLATO; BACKGROUND VIA ISTOCK.

roughly a single cup of pale urushi sap, and once that sap has been extracted, the tree is cut down. So, urushi is like the blood of trees. Obtaining it requires a botanical sacrifice, true, but one that is not irrevocable. Nature kicks in, the slain tree regenerates shoots from its stump and the slow cycle begins all over again the following spring.

Immense work goes into tapping urushi trees and processing the sap, which is done by hand. The sap will have different qualities depending on which season it's collected in: Spring sap contains more water, while summer sap has a higher concentration of urushiol, the chemical compound that gives urushi lacquer its indestructible hard glossiness. The sap is poured into wooden vats and placed under a heat source or outside on hot days. Workers stir it continuously by hand.

Kintsugi has traditionally been used to mend pottery, but jewellers have borrowed the technique to dramatically upcycle flawed and fractured gems. The well-trained lacquer master carefully cleans each fragment of stone. Deftly, they coat the surfaces of the fissure, join the pieces together and leave the glued-together gem to set, which requires a high humidity of up to 80 per cent and a temperature of 24°C. It takes the lacquer several weeks to form a matrix of molecules over the surface, bonding the gem pieces together for what will now be thousands of years. The urushi glue is then sanded down, and gold is dusted over the lacquered cracks.

Besides the immeasurable value of time and skill poured into patiently reconstructing a broken object, it is the materials—the gold, of course, but also the lacquer—that make the repair as precious, if not more so, as the thing being repaired. Perhaps this is what Japanese jeweller Milamore is hinting at in its kintsugi-inspired (but not kintsugi-repaired) floating pavé diamond gold rings and necklaces.

Italian jewellery house Pomellato has introduced a kintsugi collection consisting of reclaimed broken gemstones. Tokyo artist Maya Higuchi is collaborating with Pomellato to create rings, pendant necklaces and earrings from damaged jet and volcanic opals called kogolong. Her gold-slashed repair work gives the pieces their contemporary abstract chocolate-box aesthetic. The kintsugi also makes each piece absolutely one of a kind.

Many fine-jewellery clients who buy "nothing but the best" won't understand plunking down a few thousand dollars for a glued-together ring. But kintsugi philosophy is seeping into a West that is trying to be more sustainable and less blinkered about perfection. More than just a way to fix broken things, kintsugi is a philosophy about broken things—that we don't discard them, that we fix them and that we fix them by elevating their brokenness, not concealing it. People are taking kintsugi to heart and baring the unique chips and cracks of their life experience to others. And in high jewellery, where poorly placed flaws reduce gemstones to a sliver of their worth, kintsugi is turning trash into shimmering treasures. ■

Diamond slice
and 22 karat gold
pendant on an 18 karat
gold chain, $6,120,
Jamie Joseph

Oak wood and
18 karat gold necklace,
$7,000, **Édéenne**

Mother-of-pearl,
diamond and 18
karat gold charm,
price upon request,
Milamore

Opal and
18 karat gold
plated ring, $335,
**Moondrop
Creations**

Art Class

Texas-based gallery owner Reyne Hirsch talks about her favourite watches—including the $5 garage-sale find that kicked off a lifelong passion.

As told to **LAURIE BROOKINS**

Every watch in my collection comes with a story or memory I appreciate. That goes back to my first, which I've had since I was 20 or 21 years old. I had moved to New York City for work, and my next-door neighbour was having a garage sale. In a box of costume jewellery, I noticed this cool-looking watch—a Tissot. I didn't own a watch at the time; this one didn't work, but I thought it was really pretty. It was only $5, so I figured that even if nobody could fix it, it was still worth it.

Not long after, I took it to a jewellery store that did watch repairs. The guy took it in the back, and a few minutes and $3 later, my watch was working and he'd cleaned it up so it looked all sparkly. He also told me it was worth about $250—maybe not an expensive watch but pretty good for an $8 investment. After that, I started going to estate sales and yard sales more often, and it really kicked off my interest in wristwatches. That's how I found a 1920s art deco watch that I love; it's platinum with a rectangular case. Another fun one is a LeCoultre, but unfortunately it has an unusual faceted crystal that I know would be impossible to replace. That's the only downside of vintage watches—finding replacement parts when needed.

Today I have about 15 or 18 pieces in my collection, and I'll trade one out if I come across something I really like. I'm fine with letting go of some pieces; I think that comes from my years of being a dealer and from doing *Antiques Roadshow* for 13 seasons. I do it with things like furniture and artwork in my home as well; if I fall in love with something, I can let go of something else to make room for it. But there are certain watches I'll never part with—my grandmother's watch being the best example. Her name is Alice, and she's still with us and very active. At 102 years old, she's living her best life.

Several years ago, she gave me some of her more valuable things ("Just leave me some costume jewellery in case I go to

Prized Possessions

Reyne Hirsch wears a Cardinal lapel watch given to her by a friend and a 1970 Jaeger-LeCoultre model made for Pierre Cardin that she bought at auction.

PHOTOGRAPHY (THIS PAGE) BY ALIDA BONIFAZ. HAIR, ZELTY MENDOZA. MAKEUP, CORI ASTON.

lunch with a friend"). Among them was her beautiful watch. It's solid gold on a gold band and has a small rectangular case, a diamond bezel and a white dial, and it was made sometime in the 1950s. The dial is marked Walzel. In Houston, there's a jeweller named Walzel that's been around since the 1940s; in those days, it was very common for jewellers to sell watches under their own brand.

I absolutely treasure this piece, of course, and would never think of selling it. I also know its value is largely sentimental. In the current marketplace, this is the kind of watch that sadly would be scrapped for its gold and diamond value, but for me, you can't put a price tag on its meaning. And I still wear it once in a great while, especially if I'm going to a cocktail event and wearing a simple black dress.

Other pieces in my collection might be termed "more serious" among watch collectors. I own a Chopard Happy Sport watch with the floating diamonds that dance across the dial; it was given to me by a friend who has since passed away, and I like to wear it because it makes me think of her and how proud she was to own that watch. My partner and I run a pair of galleries in Dallas and Austin, and we're both big collectors of Louis Comfort Tiffany; when Rolex debuted an Oyster Perpetual with a dial that is so similar to that beautiful Tiffany blue, I bought one for myself as a nod to our being Tiffany collectors and dealers for many years. It definitely gets noticed.

The Rolex is my current favourite, but the watch I wear most often is by Gucci. I'm a very casual girl who wears jeans a lot, and this is a wide-cuff model that, similar to a Jaeger-LeCoultre Reverso, has a dial you can turn over so it looks like a piece of jewellery. I certainly appreciate the craft of fine watchmaking and a complicated movement, but I don't take it too seriously with respect to the things I love and like to wear.

Because of my collection and because of what I do, people ask me all the time "What should I buy?" And my advice is the same for watches as it is with so many things: Buy what you love. But if it's so expensive that you're afraid to wear it, then why have it? Ultimately, a great watch is something that you enjoy wearing and that puts a smile on your face. ■

Four Watches With Vintage Inspirations

CARTIER

The latest update on Cartier's Tank Française, introduced in 1996, offers a sportier feel while still exuding the details beloved by fans of the house. Available in three sizes in either yellow gold or stainless steel, the small-model Tank ($36,600, at cartier.com) is seen here in gold with diamond accents and features a quartz movement.

TISSOT

Founded in 1853, Tissot has classic styling that extends to this Bellissima Small Lady ($625, at tissotwatches.com), a quartz timepiece that features a 26-millimetre round steel case on a two-tone steel interchangeable quick-release bracelet. Roman numerals adorn the guilloche-patterned dial.

GUCCI

In a diminutive rectangular case, the iconic Gucci stripes—employed by the brand since 1951—are highlighted on the mother-of-pearl dial on this G-Frame watch ($1,885, at gucci.com) with an interchangeable yellow gold PVD mesh bracelet.

ROLEX

The latest version of the Rolex Datejust 31 ($12,200, at rolex.com), which debuted in 1945, features a floral-motif dial in a hue the brand has dubbed "azzurro blue," with diamond accents that do double duty as indices on the dial's outer perimeter. The 31-millimetre case also showcases Rolex's signature fluted bezel and is placed on an Oyster bracelet.

LOST AND FOUND

Canada Goose Spring 2023

Can losing your luggage in the Azores ever be a good thing? **Annika Lautens** says it can, as long as you're armed with outerwear from Canada Goose's Spring 2023 collection.

I shouldn't have been surprised that I lost my luggage. I've seen the news: In 2023, the whole world is collectively battling to retrieve their bags. Yet here I was at 3:00 a.m. Toronto time at the Ponta Delgada Airport in the Azores—a Portuguese archipelago of nine islands in the mid-Atlantic—with no suitcase in sight. Sleep deprived and jet-lagged, I felt the panic start to set in: Would I have to wear the same T-shirt for four straight days? What would I do about shoes? And, oh my God, my precious skincare! But a funny thing happened in the 24 hours it took to recover my luggage. Allow me to explain.

In honour of Canada Goose's Spring 2023 collection and its campaign, shot by Cole Sprouse, the outerwear brand had invited a bunch of international editors to the Azores to experience its new gear. Our Live in the Open itinerary featured phrases like "waterfall walk," "black-sand beaches," "burying stew in volcanic soil" (more on this later) and other adventure-related activities. Like with the Canada Goose trip I took to Iceland a few months earlier, we had been warned that the weather was wildly unpredictable—hot sun one minute and heavy rain the next. I had carefully packed light layers and things I wouldn't mind getting muddy in an attempt to channel my inner Bear Grylls (minus the eating-bugs part). So my comfort-first plane clothing and white sneakers weren't exactly going to cut it. Insert panic.

Eager to help, Canada Goose sent me to town to pick up some necessities (read "underwear"). But what started out as a short shopping trip quickly escalated into an impromptu

PHOTOGRAPHY: (THIS PAGE) MAIN AND SIDEBAR COURTESY OF CANADA GOOSE; (OPPOSITE PAGE) MAP, WATERFALL AND LANDSCAPE COURTESY OF ANNIKA LAUTENS.

CANADA GOOSE
SÃO MIGUEL ISLAND
AZORES · PORTUGAL
NORTH ATLANTIC OCEAN

A map of São Miguel Island by Canada Goose in the lobby of the Octant Furnas hotel

An unexpected view from the Miradouro do Pico do Ferro

private tour, thanks to an incredibly kind and enthusiastic Portuguese driver. I watched the sunrise in the mountains and mist, hiked to a short hilltop to get a bird's-eye view of the lush (and I mean LUSH!) greenery and saw a candy land of colourful buildings—none of which I would've experienced had my suitcase not gone missing.

My limited clothing options also meant that I relied heavily on the gear that Canada Goose gifted me—and boy did I put it to the test. As predicted, when I was walking around the Fumarolas Lagoa das Furnas, the weather went from warm and sunny to cold and rainy in minutes. Stuck in a forest with nowhere to run or hide, the only option I had was to put my hood up and brave the storm. But these conditions are exactly what the Kenora jacket, Cypress vest and Journey boots were designed for.

The rainwear, which I'm happy to report successfully kept me dry, is made from the brand's trademarked three-layer fabric, Tri-Durance, a windproof and waterproof material that's breathable and flexible. And by layering the jacket with the vest, which features a recycled nylon that can protect you in temperatures as low as –5°C, I was able to stay warm despite the wet weather and then take it off once I began overheating when my lack of cardio caught up with me.

Moreover, the streamlined silhouette and minty colour made a surprisingly great dinner ensemble. Think Hiker Barbie meets model-on-location. While I would usually be plagued with deciding what to wear to meet my international colleagues, not having my luggage made my decision easy. Instead of worrying about whether so-and-so liked my Y2K co-ord, I could focus on meeting people and actually be in the moment.

As luck (or a lot of hustle from the airline and the Canada Goose team) would have it, I was reunited with my wardrobe the following day, but it suddenly seemed silly that I had packed so much when this one jacket and vest are so versatile. Don't get me wrong—it was great to have my moisturizer back, and I'm certainly hoping my bag doesn't go missing again. Still, when it came time to bury some stew in volcanic soil to cook the traditional São Miguel dish Cozido das Furnas, there was no question about what I was going to wear. For a dinner journey to the centre of the earth, only Journey boots would do. ■

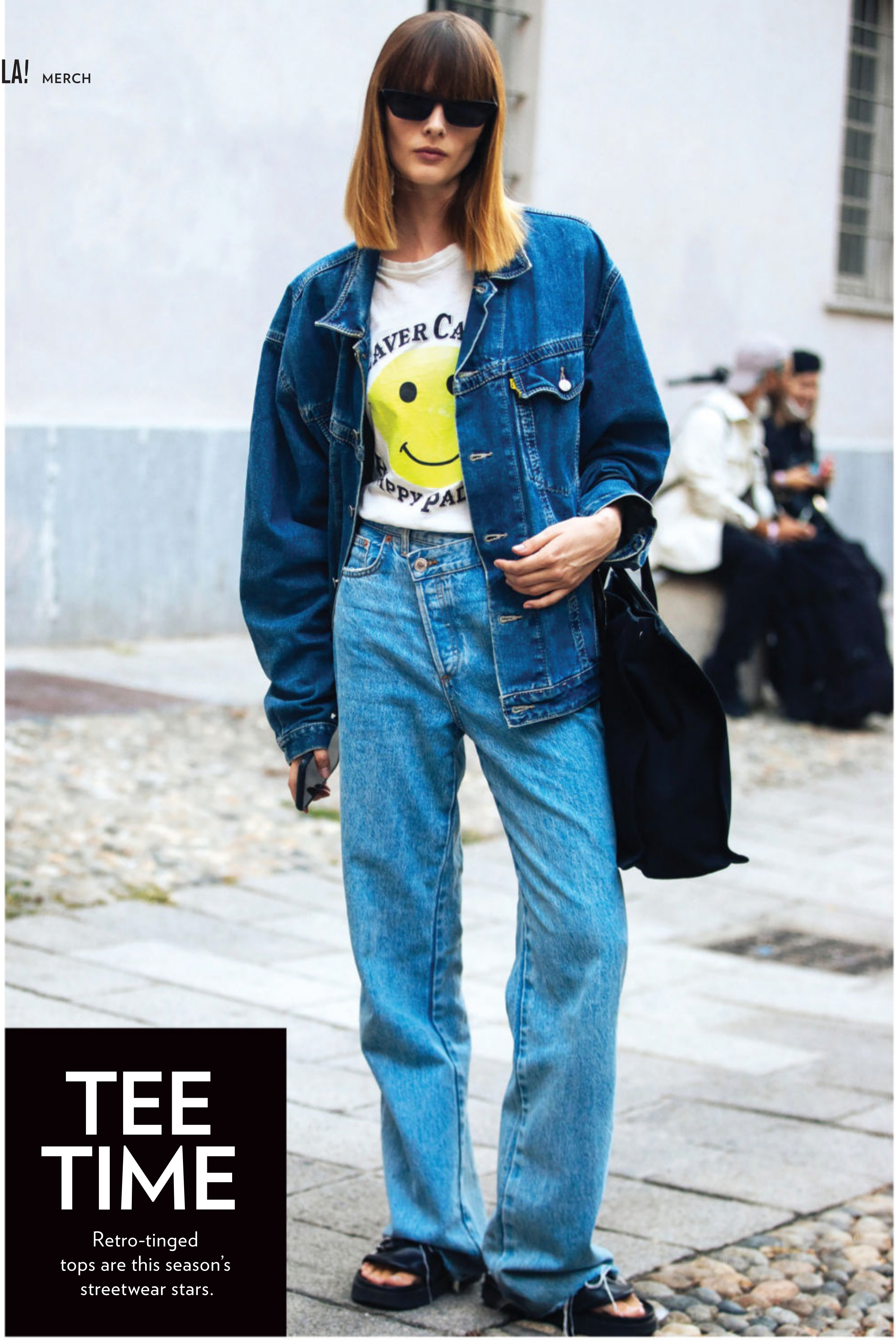
Lautens at Parque Natural da Ribeira dos Caldeirões

SHOP THE LOOK

Kenora Rain Jacket, $650,
Canada Goose

Cypress Down Vest, $595,
Canada Goose

Journey Boots, $795,
Canada Goose


AVER CA
PPY PAL

TEE TIME

Retro-tinged tops are this season's streetwear stars.

STYLE TIP

Oversized fits and contrasting washes take the double-denim look into present-day perfection.

Le Specs, $195

Butter, $175

AllSaints, $450

DAYTONA 500
Winston Cup Series

Ellie Mae, $165

Jenny Bird, $160

Dr. Martens, $120

Slvrlake, $425

Celine Menswear

Off-White

Mowalola

Undercover

Egonlab Menswear

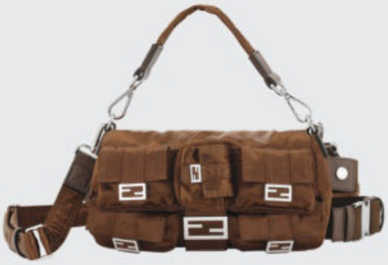
EDITOR: JILLIAN VIEIRA. PHOTOGRAPHY: MAIN BY MELODIE JENG VIA GETTY; RUNWAY VIA LAUNCHMETRICS.COM/SPOTLIGHT.

Cult Classics

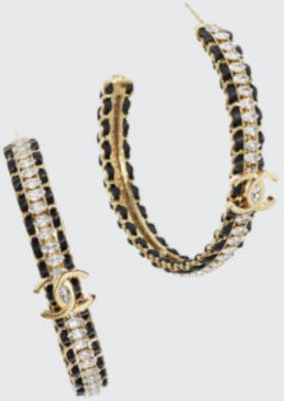
Fine lines and iconic details give fashion's greatest hits staying power.

STYLE TIP
If you lean more modern than OG, look for items that put a new spin on the tried-and-true.

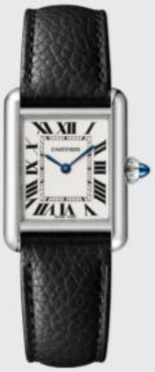
Tom Ford Menswear Spring 2023



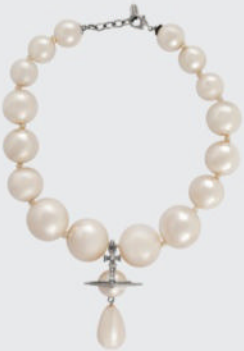
Fendi, $5,000



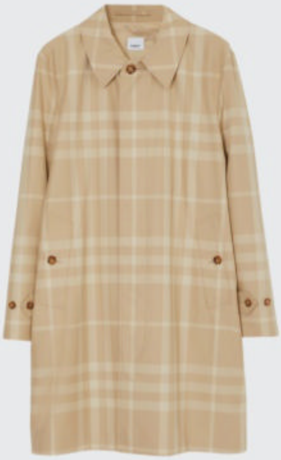
Chanel, price upon request



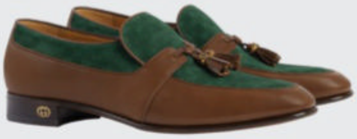
Cartier, $3,700



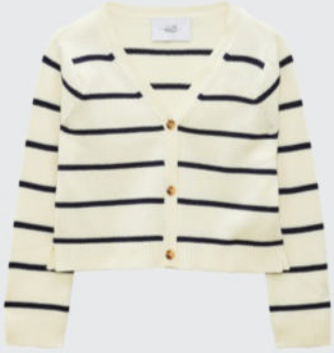
Vivienne Westwood, $675



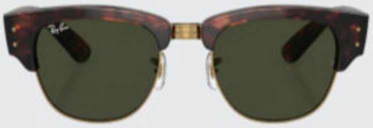
Burberry, $3,190



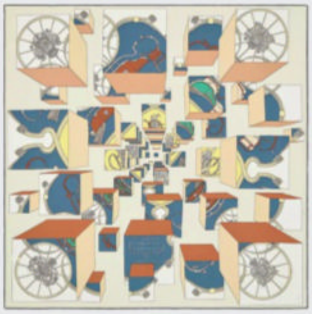
Gucci, $1,270



T. Line, $325

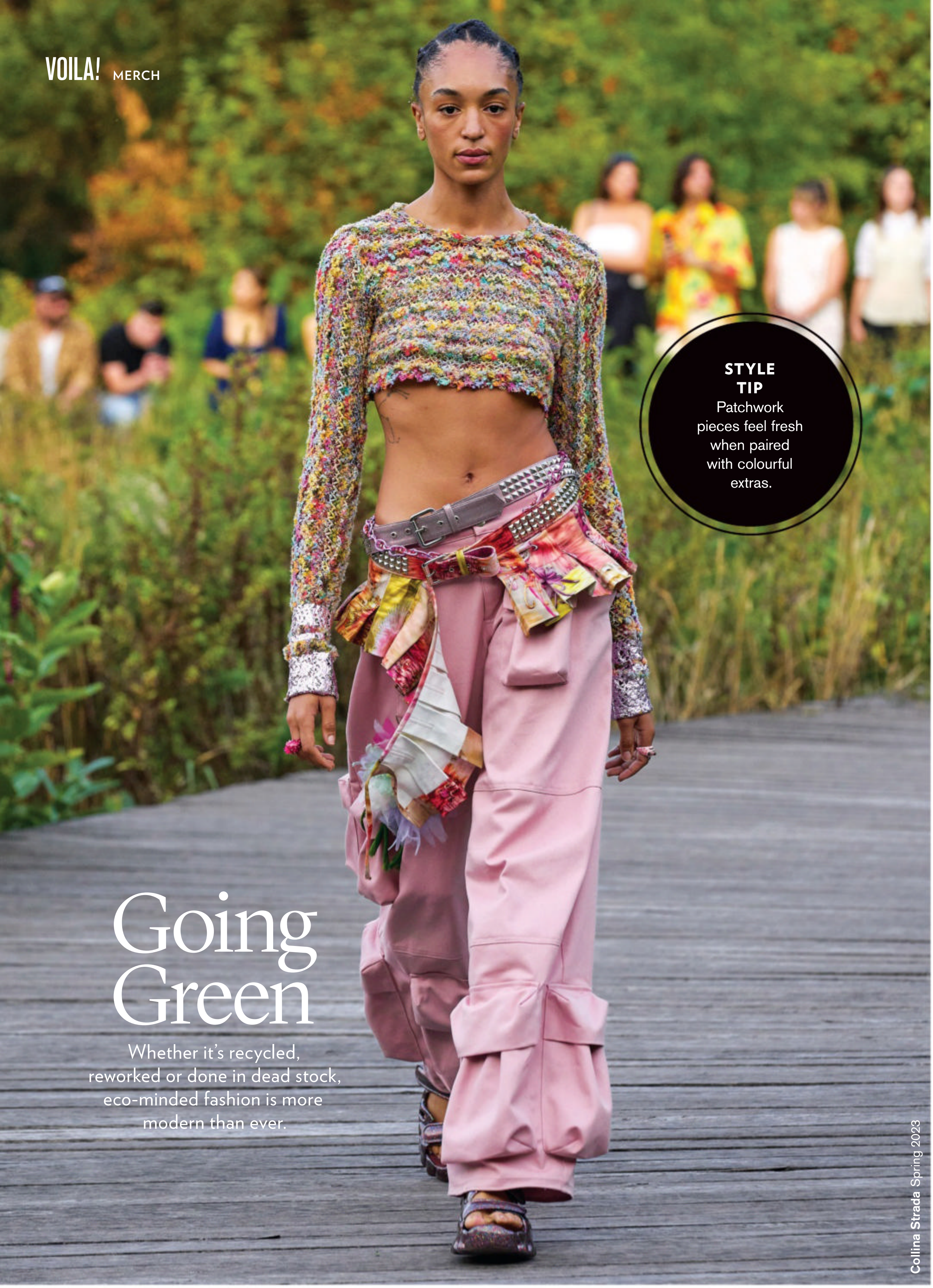


Ray-Ban, $220



Hermès, $500

EDITOR: JILLIAN VIEIRA. PHOTOGRAPHY: MAIN VIA LAUNCHMETRICS.COM/SPOTLIGHT.

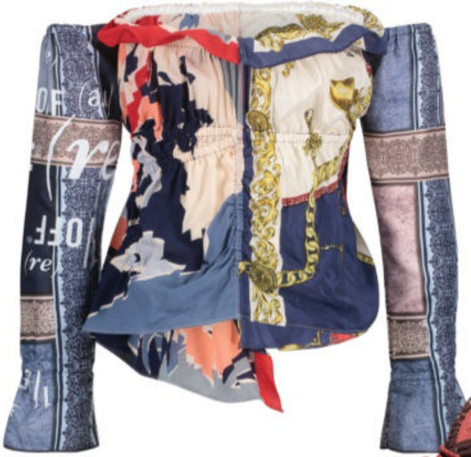


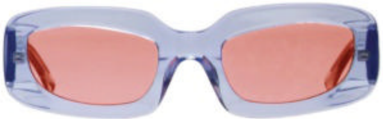
Going Green

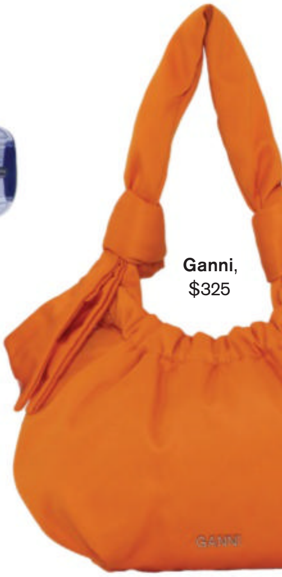
Whether it's recycled, reworked or done in dead stock, eco-minded fashion is more modern than ever.

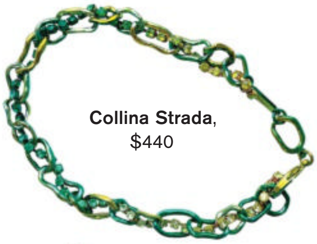
STYLE TIP
Patchwork pieces feel fresh when paired with colourful extras.

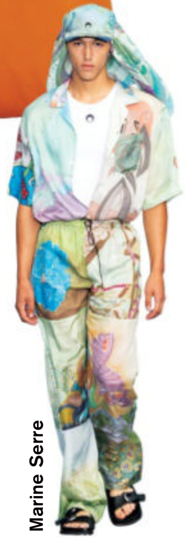
Collina Strada Spring 2023

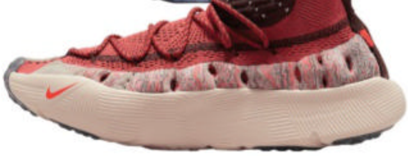

1/Off, $505

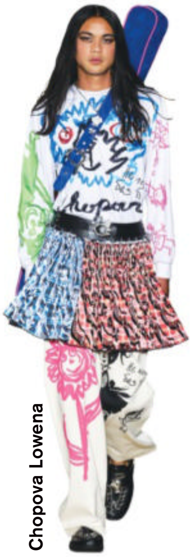

Maguire, $95

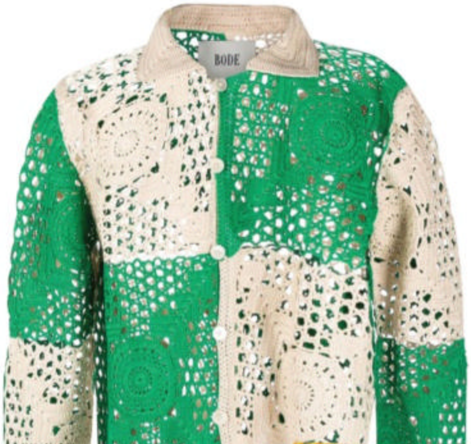

Ganni, $325

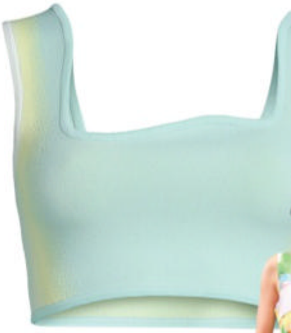

Collina Strada, $440

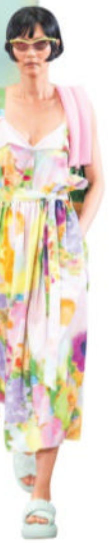

Marine Serre

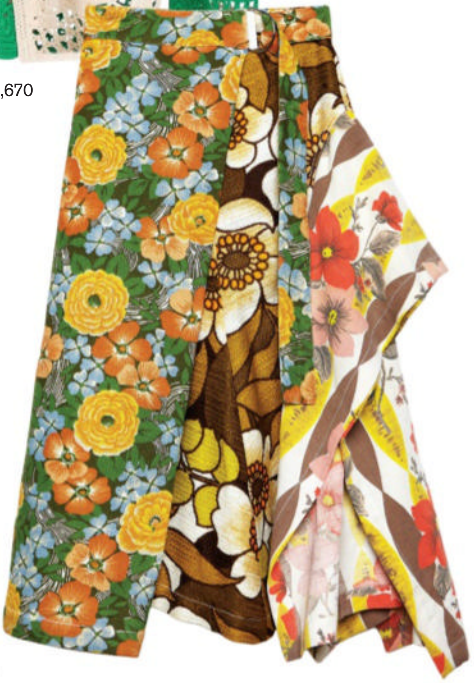

Nike, $260

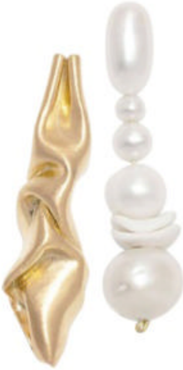

Chopova Lowena

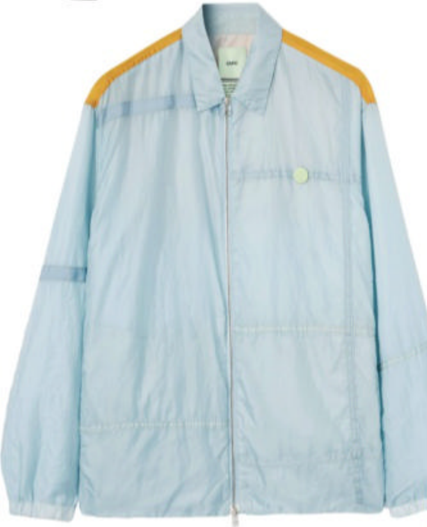

Bode, $1,670

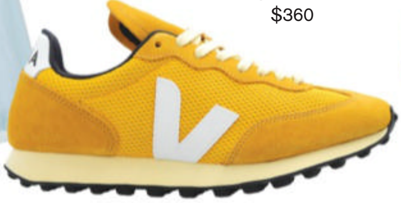

PH5, $255


Stine Goya


Colville, $1,905


Completedworks, $360


OAMC, $1,270


Veja, $390

EDITOR: JILLIAN VIEIRA. PHOTOGRAPHY: RUNWAY VIA LAUNCHMETRICS.COM/SPOTLIGHT.

TREES FOR LIFE

Plant a tree. Thank a hero.

First responders. Nurses. Frontline workers. We're honouring the sacrifices of those who serve us by planting trees in their names. Together, we can help plant living tributes to the people who matter. Donate today at **treesforlife.ca.**

CANVAS

HAIR · SKIN · EYES · LIPS · NAILS · ETC.

Vivetta Spring 2023

ROOT CAUSE

From clip-ins to sew-ins, the world of hair extensions is a pretty magical one—it gives you the ability to drastically transform your look. Discover some responsible brands that are ensuring you can look, feel *and* do good.

(SEE PAGE 54.)

TEXT BY NATASHA BOATENG. PHOTOGRAPHY VIA LAUNCHMETRICS.COM/SPOTLIGHT.

ECO STARS

New & Now

The creators of these latest beauty buys are on a quest to improve wasteful practices, employing everything from responsible ingredient sourcing to reusable alternatives.

ACE *That* BASE

Saie's 36-shade Glowy Super Skin Weightless Hydrobounce Serum Foundation ($54) is a skincare-makeup hybrid formulated with hyaluronic acid, polyglutamic acid and squalane to treat skin while providing medium coverage. And the packaging is fully recyclable: Once the glass bottle has been thoroughly rinsed out post-use, it can be placed in your everyday blue bin, and the cap and pump (both made from 50 per cent post-consumer recycled plastic) can be sent to Pact Collective, a non-profit that sorts through hard-to-recycle smaller beauty items.

CLARINS
PARIS
Hydra-Essentiel [HA²]
Soin de nuit repulpant "anti-soif"
Plumps, moisturizes and quenches, night care
Toutes peaux - All skin types

IN ALL HONESTY Being able to trace where the ingredients in products are sourced, harvested and produced is key for a greener planet, and it's a level of transparency that Clarins is on a mission to provide. Via blockchain technology, the French skincare brand's T.R.U.S.T. platform gives you access to all the steps in the product manufacturing process—quality and safety controls, where a formula has been prepared and packed, plus the origins and harvesting methods for many plant-based extracts—for 30 (and counting) of its core products, like the latest Hydra-Essentiel [HA2] day cream ($49). It's simple: Enter a product batch number on the brand's website and watch the information roll in.

Sponge Addict

Most traditional shower loofahs and sponges are made of non-recyclable plastic. Everist's pillowy Charcoal Konjac Sponge ($14) is crafted from 100 per cent natural konjac plant fibre (which is known to help support skin's pH balance) and infused with detoxifying bamboo charcoal powder. The best part: It can be tossed in your home compost after two to three months of use.

everist
COMPOSTABLE KONJAC BODY SPONGE
ÉPONGE KONJAC CORPORELLE COMPOSTABLE

TEXT: "SPONGE ADDICT," "IN ALL HONESTY," "TOOL KIT" AND "ACE THAT BASE" BY NATASHA BOATENG; "MUST MIST" BY SARAH MARIOTTI. PHOTOGRAPHY: HERRERA COURTESY OF CAROLINA HERRERA.

MUST MIST

Carolina A. Herrera is a disrupter of sorts. She wears fragrance to bed and refers to herself as "the sheep that turns the other way." From just one conversation, it's clear that the beauty creative director of Carolina Herrera (her mother's eponymous empire) is a free spirit with a sharp mind. "I think we're all made up of opposites," she says. "No one is 100 per cent good. No one is 100 per cent bad." Perhaps it's this disposition that inspired the pursuit of Good Girl Blush ($178 for 80 ml), the label's latest eau de parfum. The vegan formula combines contrasting scent profiles—think warm vanilla cut with zesty mandarin and bergamot along with a powdery-floral bouquet of peony and ylang-ylang—achieved through sustainable sourcing practices. By working with Swiss fragrance manufacturer Givaudan's Sourcing4Good program, the brand ensures that the raw ingredients in the juice are traceable (90 per cent of them are of natural origin), with key ingredients sourced via energy- and waste-minimizing upcycling, a process that reuses already-distilled materials. What's more, Sourcing4Good strives to improve working conditions at the factory and farm levels. Heading toward a greener future requires deviating from the norm, and luckily, this is what Herrera does best. "That's the whole point—be a little mischievous, but be a good person in the end," she says.

LastObject.

Tool Kit

More than a billion single-use cotton swabs—a beauty essential found in most bathrooms—are produced every day. Sure, they save the day when it comes to perfecting makeup looks, but most of them end up in our oceans. LastObject's The LastSwab Beauty Trio Pro ($33) is here to disrupt that game. Replacing up to 2,750 single-use swabs, this reusable triad (simply clean them with soap and water) fulfills all your makeup needs: smudging and blending eye looks, erasing mishaps, feathering brows, separating clumpy lashes, applying lip products and more. (One of them is even suitable for cleaning ears.) What's more, the case is made from ocean-bound plastic.

BUSY BODY

TikTok sensation and makeup enthusiast Gabe Adams-Wheatley is defining his own limits.

By **ODESSA PALOMA PARKER**

"Journey" gets used a lot these days as a way of describing life's unfolding, but for social media sensation Gabe Adams-Wheatley, it's a deeply accurate descriptor in so many ways.

The Brazilian-born influencer has Hanhart syndrome, a condition that can lead to missing limbs at birth; his birth mother abandoned him, and his birth father "had already left her for another family." Plans were put in place to send Adams-Wheatley to America for medical treatment, but what actually came next was an adoption by a family in Utah. And he hasn't stopped since, pushing himself to evolve from teenage dance enthusiast to motivational speaker and, more recently, makeup-tutorial maven.

"I first got into makeup because I used to be a dancer in high school," says the Salt Lake City-based entrepreneur who still busts a move on TikTok, where he has over four million followers. "I remember coming home one day and telling my parents I needed to get some makeup. I come from a very conservative religious background, and the reaction was 'Men don't wear makeup.' I explained that every TV actor and news anchor wears it. So, they let me buy some products and said, 'You can only wear this when you're performing.'"

Top Shelf

The beauty must-haves Gabe Adams-Wheatley can't get enough of.

dermalogica
daily milkfoliant

"It's so satisfying to watch this exfoliating powder turn into an oatmeal-y texture, and it's really fun to put some on with a brush and pretend you're at the spa." **Dermalogica** Daily Milkfoliant, $25

"It lives up to its name—it's very buttery!" **One/Size** Turn Up the Base Butter Silk Concealer, $33

KRISTIN ESS

"This shampoo and conditioner are my favourite hair products. They leave my hair smelling good for days and strengthen my curls." **Kristin Ess** Moisture Rich Curl Shampoo and Curl Conditioner, $19 each

PHOTOGRAPHY: (THIS PAGE) MAIN BY ROBIN L MARSHALL VIA GETTY; (OPPOSITE PAGE) ADAMS-WHEATLEY COURTESY OF GABE ADAMS-WHEATLEY.

But Adams-Wheatley found himself sneakily putting it on before he'd leave for school. "I didn't know what I was doing," he admits of his initial attempts to apply blush, bronzer and beyond. It was one of his brothers (Adams-Wheatley is one of 14 kids and the only adoptee) who motivated him to get more serious about the pursuit. "That jump-started my interest in wanting to get better," he says. "I watched a bunch of YouTubers and saw how they were doing their makeup. Then I modified it in a way that I was able to do myself."

Adams-Wheatley uses a tool called a dressing stick for wardrobe changes, which vary from sequined frocks to sweater vests. But he doesn't typically use adaptive makeup tools during his videos, since not everyone with a disability would find them of use. "Each person's disability and needs are different," he says.

Yet that doesn't mean he hasn't let viewers in on his technique. Folks who follow Adams-Wheatley's tutorials, which range from "Let's Do a Euphoria Makeup Look" to special-occasion transformations, are familiar with how he rests various products and tools on a tabletop to help him apply them. His husband, Adam, was crucial in helping him finesse this routine.

"When I first started doing my makeup, I would do it while lying on the floor," recalls Adams-Wheatley. "I'd have a towel placed under me, so I wouldn't get product on the carpet or on the hardwood floors, and I'd have a mirror right in front of me. For my 22nd birthday, my husband surprised me by buying an Ikea desk and chopping its legs down to my height. He then bought me a ring light and a few products. That's when TikTok really started happening for me."

Adams-Wheatley has since found himself sitting front row at New York Fashion Week, walking the red carpet at Loveloud Festival, visiting the White House last year for a Pride celebration and working on major campaigns. "A year ago, you wouldn't see somebody like me doing an ad for Dermalogica or Estée Lauder or other brands that are marketed to the everyday person," he says. "It's so nice to be able to be the face for so many different communities and know that they all have my back and support me. It's also rewarding when younger kids come up to me and say they watch my videos. Or parents who say they use my videos to teach their children that it's OK to be different and that we need to celebrate that. And that it's OK to express yourself with makeup or want to wear dresses and wigs."

Adams-Wheatley does admit that being in the public eye comes with its challenges, including online bullying and fans who don't respect personal boundaries. And even though he describes his success as "overnight," he admits that he takes it one day at a time. "I feel that proving myself is something I've been doing my whole life," he says. "I'm constantly having to show people that I'm much more than just the gay guy without arms and legs."

And he encourages others to follow his lead—and try out his tips for a perfectly blended smoky eye—as they accompany him on his journey. "People are always going to tell you that you can't," he says of what has kept him motivated over the years. "But you can. And the 'sky' is not the limit—*you* create your limits." ■

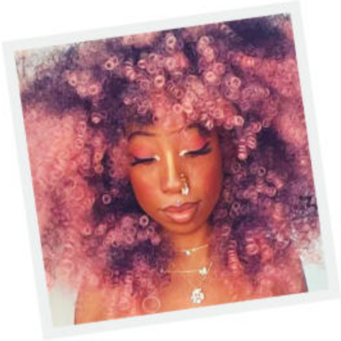
Editor's Note: *Gabe Adams-Wheatley came out as trans as this issue was going to print. Please see* ***fashionmagazine.com/adams-wheatley****.*

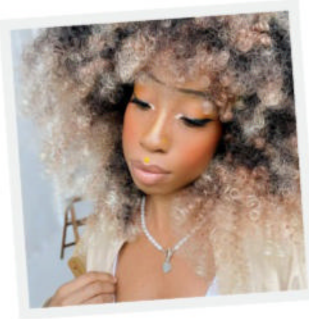
"This foundation has a skinlike finish and isn't heavy." **Haus Labs** Triclone Skin Tech Foundation, $59

"This contour meets highlighter is really good for everyday use." **NYX** Wonder Stick, $19

DAISY
MARC JACOBS

"The scent is divine!" **Marc Jacobs** Daisy Eau de Toilette, $135 for 100 ml





Colour Play

For 25-year-old astrologer Maryaam Lewis-Herbert, hair-colour change-ups are the ultimate form of self-expression.

As told to **NATASHA BOATENG**

I've always had a fixation on and a love for hair. I can even remember being four years old and drawing stick figures with super-long hair. My parents were always very into beauty and fashion, so I think they were a big influence when it came to me being expressive with my looks. My sister was also a huge contributing factor, especially when it came to my colourful aesthetic. She used to have locs, and I would watch her colour them all sorts of hues. I always thought that that was cool, and as I got older, I wanted to be able to do something similar but in my own unique way.

My colour choices are very reflective of where I am in my life. Spiritually speaking, colours have their own energies and vibrations. For example, my hair was pink last summer—a time when I needed to embrace more self-love. (Pink is associated with love, inner peace, balance and harmony.) I've also rocked brown to be more grounded and blue for more calming and healing energy. As I go through transition periods and phases in life, my hair colours mirror them.

PHOTOGRAPHY: (THIS PAGE) LEFT AND RIGHT COLUMNS VIA INSTAGRAM/@SHAWTYHERBS; MIDDLE COLUMN COURTESY OF MARYAAM LEWIS-HERBERT; (OPPOSITE PAGE) AYUNE HAIR COURTESY OF AYUNE HAIR; LUXY HAIR BY COLIN GAUDET COURTESY OF LUXY HAIR; NEW VILLAGE BRAID COURTESY OF NEW VILLAGE BRAID.

When it comes to my curls, I'm a volume girl; I like to add extensions to my natural hair to accentuate it but mostly to achieve my colours—I'm terrified to dye my own hair, especially any bright shade. Extensions are fun, versatile and safer for the health and longevity of my hair. I love wigs for these same reasons. I've learned to make braided wigs—plaiting my own hair isn't always the most convenient thing for me because I like to switch up my style a lot—and I'm in the process of learning to make lace-front wigs.

With my hair-care routine, I try to be mindful of not over-consuming products; I try to stick to a plan—like deep conditioning once a month and investing in good hydrating oils—and not go overboard with formulas. And I'll reuse wigs and certain types of extensions until I basically can't anymore. I think that it's important to buy quality products that will last, as opposed to constantly purchasing new ones.

A hair-care routine can be such a spiritual thing, too. Like, at night, I wear a really big bonnet—I often laugh at myself when I have it on because it kind of looks like the mushroom hat from Mario—to preserve my curls, but I've also noticed that when my hair is covered, I feel protected in a way. I think that comes from my experiences: Rocking really big curls out in public, I've had random people touch my hair without asking and ask me questions like "How do you sleep?" or "Is your hair heavy?" For the most part, I understand that those types of encounters are coming from an innocent place, but sometimes, unfortunately, there are situations that feel like microaggressions.

When I was younger, I was very insecure about my looks—I literally thought I was ugly. But once I entered my 20s and did a lot of self-reflecting, healing and growth work, I felt a shift—a transformative perception of myself. It's taken a while, but I've learned to really appreciate my style and my beauty, even if I do have days where I'm like, "Am I too much for people? Too expressive, too flamboyant?" I have to remind myself sometimes that the right people will appreciate me for who I am. I've learned to accept myself, and I know that I wouldn't want to be any other way. ■

EXTENSION SCHOOL

The wig and hair-extension market is a multi-billion-dollar global industry. But many are made with landfill-bound strands of plastic (which often have an alkaline coating that can cause skin irritation), while various human-hair versions raise ethical issues surrounding sourcing. Here, discover brands bettering the game with their transparency and practices, like using premium Remy hair (strands cut or shaved straight from willing donors who are compensated in return, plus all the protective hair cuticles are preserved for sleekness and shine) and recyclable alternatives.

This Australian company sources hair from Southeast Asian women who collect their naturally shed strands for additional income. The extensions are piped (a chemical-free process) to create signature "body" and "water wave" textures. **Ayune Hair** Body Wave, from $111

Based in the United Kingdom, Larin offers dye-friendly styles, all of which are made of Remy hair from Vietnam. Donors are compensated fairly, and the brand's partner factory ensures fair working conditions. **Larin** Yaki Straight, from $146

Beloved by A-listers like Hailey Bieber and Jennifer Lopez, this Salt Lake City-based Remy hair extensions brand has a recycling program for old units through Matter of Trust, an organization that felts hair into absorbent mats used to help clean up oil spills. **Luxy Hair** 16" Peekaboo Halo Hair Extensions, $245

This made-in-Canada brand offers handcrafted, tailored human-hair extensions sourced responsibly both domestically and internationally. **Mulberry** Hair Extensions topper, from $1,490

This PVC- and alkaline-free faux braiding hair won't cause irritation and can be sent back to the brand's Virginia headquarters post-use to be recycled instead of tossed in the trash. **New Village Braid** NVB Eco Pre-stretched 26" in "Platinum Blonde," $10

TECH BOOM

DIY devices are replacing or enhancing salon treatments. **Lauren Knowles** finds out why.

Oh, the bliss of at-home skincare rituals. To our beloved sheet masks, undereye patches and facial rollers: You've been a delight, but the latest do-it-yourself skincare devices are calling and we must answer for the betterment of our self-care regimens—and faces.

The evolution of at-home skincare technology gives us the freedom to DIY many of the treatments traditionally reserved for trained professionals. Comfort and convenience are major factors and a by-product of pandemic lockdowns, says JJ Walsh of Vancouver's Formula Fig. She is one of many salon professionals who encourage the use of take-home tools to expedite the healing of laser treatments or nanoneedling. "Pairing these devices with highly active firming creams or lifting serums offers incredible results quickly," points out Toronto-based facialist Vee Mistry. "When there are visible results, customers are more likely to remain dedicated."

But the DIY skincare devices on the market are ever-changing, making it difficult to determine exactly what each one does, how it does it and whether or not it works. The pros agree that the most popular and worthwhile at-home tools are those that use LED lights, microcurrent and cryotherapy. Bonus: Many of these devices target multiple skin concerns at once (which can save you money). Read on as we unpack the science behind this trendy trio of DIY treatments and their benefits.

LIGHT IT UP LED light therapy uses varying wavelengths, including red and blue light frequencies, to combat skin concerns such as acne and inflammation. Red light treats the epidermis (the outermost layer of the skin), which absorbs light and stimulates the production of collagen proteins. The more active collagen is in the skin, the plumper and smoother it appears, which means creases and fine lines will be less visible. Blue light is aimed at the sebaceous glands (oil glands) located beneath the hair follicles; when overactive, these glands can cause oilier skin and acne. To remedy breakouts, blue light seeps in and slows down their overactivity. Plus, it can destroy acne-causing bacteria. LED light therapy can also be used to stimulate healing after procedures such as laser, Walsh says.

PHOTOGRAPHY: MAIN VIA TRUNK ARCHIVE

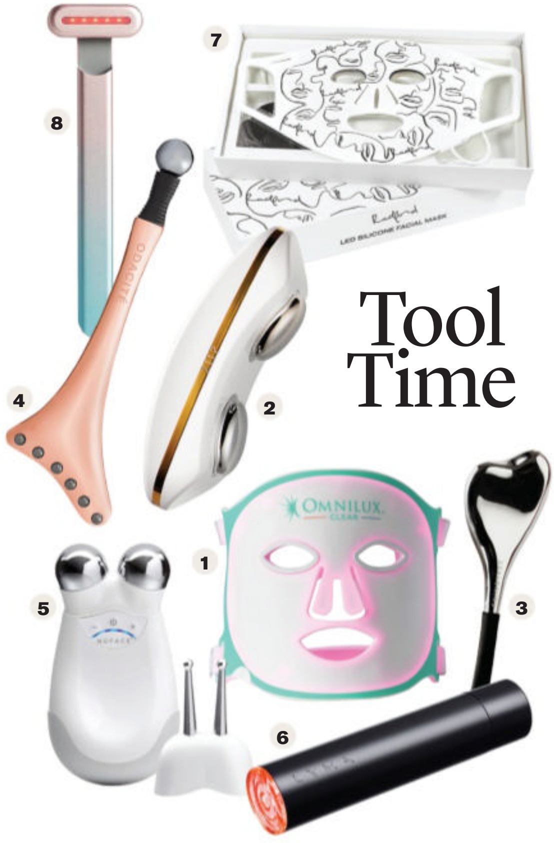
RIDE THE CURRENT As for tech fuelled by microcurrent, what you'll experience during use is a painless repeated delivery of low-grade electrical currents that mimic the natural ionic flow of the body and awaken the facial muscles. Think of it as an at-home facelift of sorts, minus the whole surgical aspect. "Using a facial 'workout' device frequently and consistently stimulates facial muscles to help tone and lift, plus it allows the products you apply afterwards to work harder," explains Walsh.

COLD COMFORTS Cryotherapy is a soothing technique that constricts blood flow to calm the skin while regulating circulation and tightening pores. Freezing temperatures cause blood vessels to contract, so once your skin returns to its normal temperature, these vessels dilate swiftly and increase the flow of blood and oxygen to the face. This rush promotes the appearance of brighter, tighter, glowing skin and reduces facial swelling caused by fluid retention—which can be the result of a high-sodium diet or even how you sleep (think getting too little or too many zees or even your sleeping position). At-home devices are an alternative to clinical cryo facials (where liquid nitrogen is involved), but storing your tools in the freezer is essential if you want to achieve the look of a true "frotox."

TAKE NOTE As you experiment with high-tech at-home skincare devices, remember we're talking real technology here. That means there can be consequences of misuse, which is why Mistry recommends having a pro set up your tools and demonstrate how to use them for optimal results. Not to mention, your skincare devices should be kept clean to avoid causing breakouts and introducing bacteria—especially if your tool exfoliates, abrades or punctures the skin (think microneedling derma rollers), Walsh warns. Consult with your aesthetician for advice about any devices that may conflict with health concerns or other procedures you've had. For example, if you've used Botox recently, Walsh advises waiting two weeks before picking up a microcurrent device.

Finally, experts warn against putting too much pressure on these tools to perform. "I always remind my clients that beauty tools and skincare are only one part of the jigsaw puzzle," Mistry shares. "To get your best skin, you must focus on the organ as an entire entity, which means looking at overall health, sleep, nutrition, using the correct skincare prescription and, lastly, commitment. These are the important pieces for lasting results." ■

Tool Time



❶ Omnilux's red- and blue-light therapy mask targets active acne, redness and inflammation while working to fade acne scarring and clear breakouts quickly. **Omnilux** Clear, $475

❷ Pair this microcurrent tool with its corresponding phone app for tips and tutorials on how to "Ziip" your way to decreased acne scarring and a more radiant complexion. **Ziip** GX, $795

❸ With a signature gel pad built into the ladle for an extra-long cooling ability, these custom cryo sticks lift, sculpt and regulate blood flow through cryotherapy and traditional gua sha motions. **Skinbyvee** Gua Sha Cryo Sticks, $175 for two

❹ Cryotherapy, acupressure and gua sha motion come together in this terahertz-crystal-powered double-edged device. **Odacité** Cryo-Tech Facial Tool, $100

❺ This bundle includes a microcurrent device for facial toning and contouring plus an attachment that targets the eye and lip areas to reduce the appearance of skin creases. **NuFace** Trinity + Eye and Lip Enhancer Attachment Bundle, $500

❻ This advanced laser combats several skincare concerns, from deep-set folds of skin and loss of elasticity to uneven texture. **Lyma** Laser Starter Kit, $3,624

❼ Radford's LED mask is clinically proven to treat acne and reduce the appearance of fine lines. **Radford** LED Silicone Facial Mask, $497

❽ Skin is de-puffed and energized thanks to this wand with four powerful treatments, including microcurrent and LED. **SolaWave** 4-in-1 Skincare Wand With Red Light Therapy, $204

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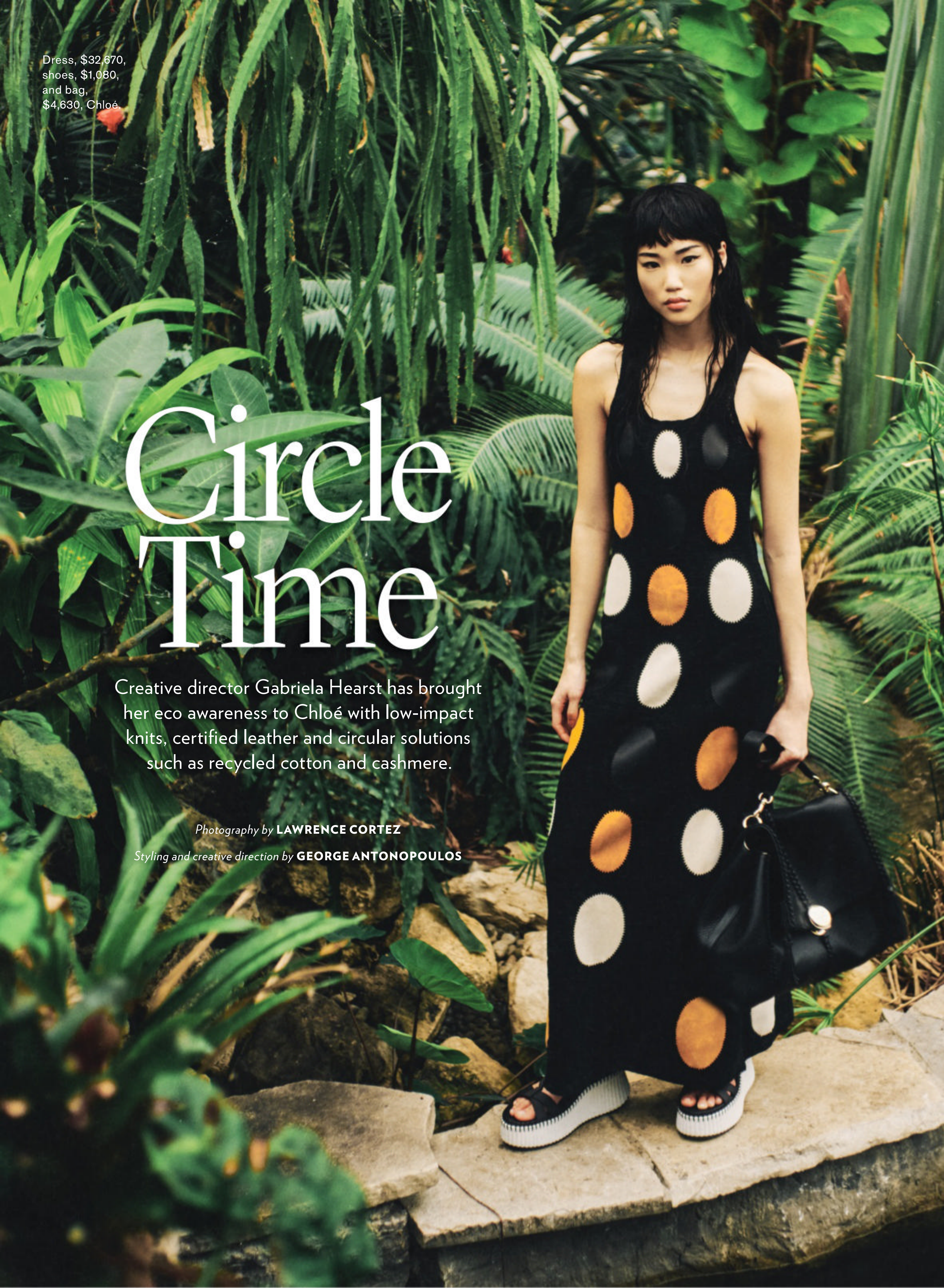
GOLDEN HOUR

With her first book about to hit the shelves, Aurora James adds another empowering moment to her career.

(SEE PAGE 68.)

TEXT BY BERNADETTE MORRA. PHOTOGRAPHY BY ROYAL GILBERT. STYLING BY TIMOTHY LUKE GARCIA.
JUMPSUIT, $2,160, ET OCHS. EARRINGS, $305, MISHO. BRACELETS, $620 EACH, THIRD CROWN.



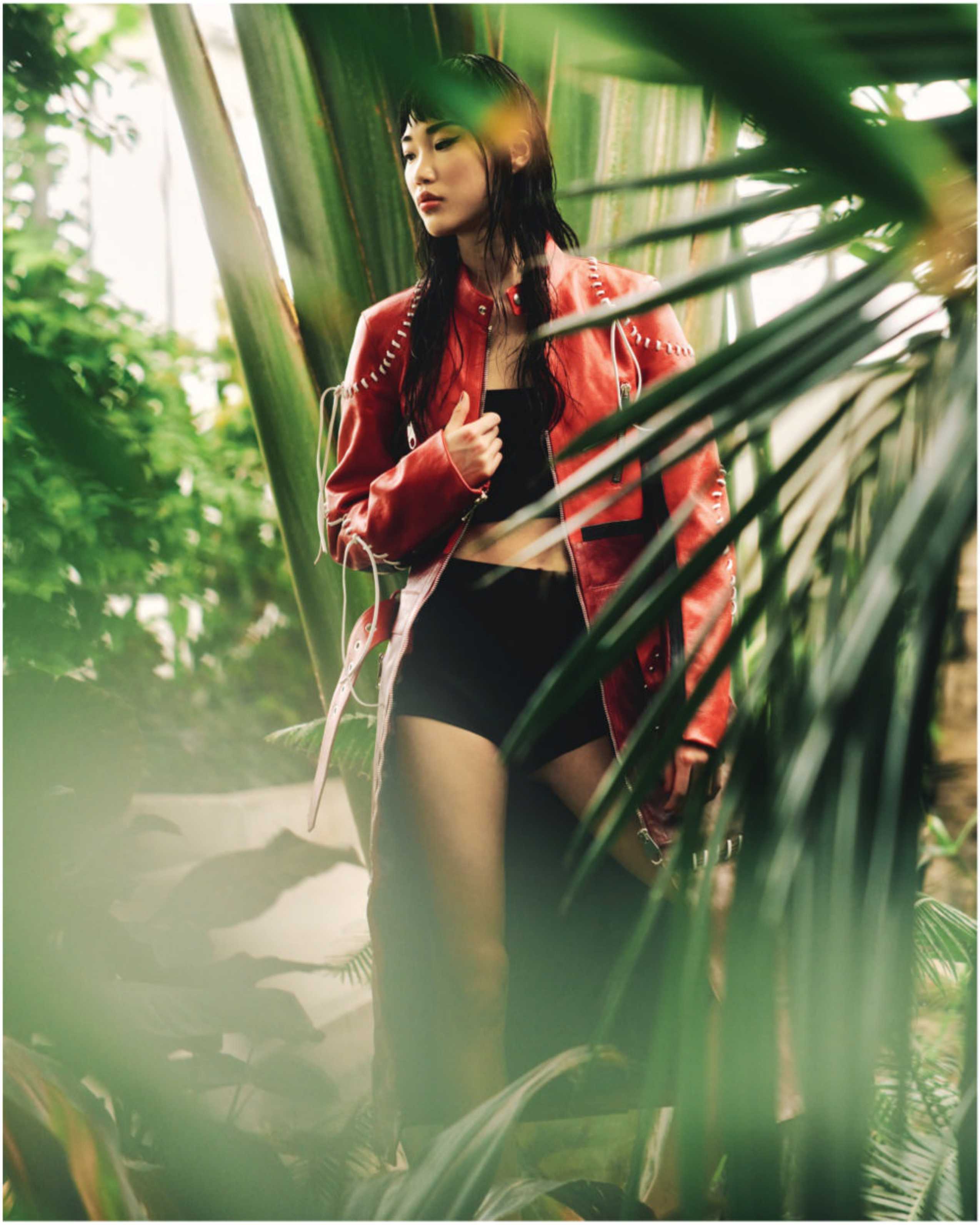
Dress, $32,670, shoes, $1,080, and bag, $4,630, Chloé.

Circle Time

Creative director Gabriela Hearst has brought her eco awareness to Chloé with low-impact knits, certified leather and circular solutions such as recycled cotton and cashmere.

Photography by **LAWRENCE CORTEZ**

Styling and creative direction by **GEORGE ANTONOPOULOS**



Jacket, $8,745, top, $825, and shorts, $640, Chloé.

Top, $1,445, pants, $3,635, eyewear, $525, and bag, $4,630, Chloé.

Dress, $7,285, and shorts, $640, Chloé.

Jacket, $6,370,
top, $1,445,
and pants,
$3,635, Chloé.

Jacket, $5,460, top, $825, shorts, $640, and shoes, $1,080, Chloé.

Top, $3,195, and pants, $8,925, Chloé.

Dress, $7,830, top, $640, and shorts, price upon request, Chloé.

Hair, Ryan McGovern for P1M.ca/Unite. Makeup, Brittany Sinclair for P1M.ca/Shiseido and Hermès. Photo assistant, Nicolas Emas Varone. Model, Yunsu Kang for Elite Toronto.

Jacket, price upon request, and dress, $2,160, Et Ochs. Earrings, $410, Third Crown.

Wild at Heart

Aurora James, founder of Brother Vellies and the Fifteen Percent Pledge, is fashioning the future of economic equality.

Words by **INGRIE WILLIAMS**

Photography by **ROYAL GILBERT**

Styling by **TIMOTHY LUKE GARCIA**

Creative direction by **GEORGE ANTONOPOULOS**

W**HEN HER FIRST BOOK**, *Wildflower: A Memoir,* hits shelves next month, Aurora James will be doing more of what she does best: empowering others while infusing the world with optimism. “You can totally mess up everything and still have the exact life you want,” declares the Canadian-born fashion entrepreneur and activist on a Zoom call from Los Angeles. “I dropped out of high school and got kicked out of Ryerson [now Toronto Metropolitan University]—both signs that were not pointing to me being one of *Glamour*’s Women of the Year,” she says, referring to an honour bestowed on her in 2022. (She was also named one of *Time*’s 100 Most Influential People of 2021.) “But you can’t count yourself out. We spend so much time thinking that we’re just too bruised to be the thing that we want to be or do what other people are doing, and it’s entirely untrue. Your own unique set of experiences actually makes you the perfect person to do the thing you want to do.”

As we chat, the 38-year-old appears effortlessly fresh-faced and energized. She has just spent Martin Luther King Jr. Day contacting and announcing the 10 grant semifinalists of her game-changing non-profit organization, the Fifteen Percent Pledge (15PP). James’s life, like the lives of so many others, was drastically altered in May 2020. As North America reeled amid the racial disparity following the death of George Floyd and citizens on both sides of the border were looking for a way forward to greater equality, her now-historic Instagram post created seismic change in a flash. In it, James put forth a simple ask: that a handful of major retailers commit 15 per cent of their shelf space to Black-owned businesses. She chose that number because it represents the percentage of Black people in the U.S. population. “When an institution is broken, you have a few options: You can leave it as it is, you can try to burn it down or you can try to rebuild it,” she says. “So, how do you use that structure to lift up more people?” With that goal in mind, 15PP was born. Having since gathered commitments from 29 notable retailers, including Hudson’s Bay, Indigo and Sephora Canada, 15PP has become one of the fastest-growing social-justice non-profit organizations while redirecting $10 billion in revenue to BIPOC-owned brands. But the effort it takes to reform a retailer with upwards of 80 stores plus a robust online business is not lost on James. “The Bay taking the 15 per cent pledge was big for them because it’s a lot easier to just not do it,” she acknowledges. “The Bay has to confront all these different things that, quite frankly, are painful. That first step is really what it’s about, because so many people are afraid to take it.”

Forward-thinking, fearless leaps and a love of fashion are part of James’s DNA. She recalls bantheplasticbag.org as one of the first URLs she bought as a teenager. “That was a lifetime ago, but sustainability and thoughtfulness around consumption have always been really important to me,” she says. James, whose father passed away when she was a young girl, was raised in Mississauga, Ont., by a single mother who instilled in her a deep appreciation for sartorial craftsmanship. “My mom was adopted at birth, and she spent a lot of time trying to understand different cultures through apparel,” James says. “She would collect all kinds of different things, like Japanese kimonos, Danish clogs and cowboy boots. She would talk to me about them—why they were made and how their materials were sourced. She really taught me about fashion almost through an anthropological lens of understanding different groups of women—where they came from and how they use clothing and accessories as tools of communication.”

Jeanne Beker is another female figure who played a key role in James’s journey. Watching *Fashion Television*, hosted by Beker, was a regular family affair in James’s house. “The way that Jeanne covered fashion, she was very serious about it, like a war correspondent backstage,” says James. “That was really when I felt that fashion was something I would likely spend large swaths of my life working on.” Years later, Beker and James would connect IRL at a Yorkville gym in Toronto, where James worked the front desk. Their casual conversation led to Beker’s offer of an internship, which landed James behind the scenes of the iconic show. “Canada really nurtured the fashion lover in me and made it happen,” she says.

In 2013, James founded the Brother Vellies accessories brand with $3,500 of her savings. Her premise was to create sustainable jobs for African artisans by featuring traditional African design practices and techniques at the luxury level. “For me, at least, it’s so much better to find joy in community and to win together,” she says. “I’ve always had a tough time advocating for myself. I do a lot better advocating on behalf of others.” She started selling her designs at a New York City flea market and just two years into her venture was named a CFDA/Vogue Fashion Fund Awards winner. The $300,000 award, plus a year of mentoring, elevated James’s brand on every level. “When you’re an entrepreneur, you throw your »

Dress, $1,695, Greta Constantine. Bodysuit, $115, Skims. Legwear, $50, Wolford. Shoes, price upon request, Brother Vellies. Earrings, $410, bracelets (left), $625 each, bracelets (right), from $520, and ring, $300, Third Crown.

Dress, $2,820,
Harbison. Earrings,
$405, Misho.

Dress, $680,
Victor Glemaud.
Ring, price upon
request, Misho.
Bracelets, prices
upon request,
Alexis Bittar.

“I JUST WANT TO MAKE SURE THAT CONSUMERS HAVE MORE **POSITIVE OPTIONS**.”

heart and soul into it,” she says. “I was probably working 18 to 20 hours a day. Half the time would be spent on my business and the other half on part-time jobs to be able to cover my bills.”

These days, her work hours are just as hefty as she splits her time between L.A. and NYC. But the tasks that demand her attention have evolved. Last December, in a full-circle moment, James was elected one of the vice-chairs of the Council of Fashion Designers of America (CFDA), along with Nepali-American designer Prabal Gurung. In addition to creating opportunities for new designers to enter the fashion space, her to-do list includes helping shape the future of luxury. “With the rise of the conscious consumer, our standards are changing,” she says. “We’re really starting to redefine luxury under a new set of criteria. It’s not just about interlocking letters anymore.” The exclusionary era of branded logos and the values behind them is over—a message loudly broadcast by the Brother Vellies gown emblazoned with “Tax the Rich” that James designed for Democratic congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez for the 2021 Met Gala. For James, who counts Christopher John Rogers and Canada’s Greta Constantine among her fave labels, ensuring that people are paid sustainably and fairly, leaving the planet in better shape than you find it and advocating for the rights of consumers and the community are integral to her definition of a modern luxury brand. “In our company, it’s something that we’re always going to be working on,” she says. “People are always going to want to buy things. I just want to make sure that consumers have more positive options.”

James’s impact on the lives of others is only destined to amplify, especially with the first Fifteen Percent Pledge Achievement Award given out this year. Five Black business owners, including Christina Funke Tegbe of beauty brand 54 Thrones and red-carpet hitmaker Sergio Hudson, received nearly $400K in grant support to scale and grow their companies. “It’s really difficult for people to become successful entrepreneurs and even more difficult for Black Americans, people of colour and women,” James says. “Trying to do anything that we can to level that playing field is critical.” This latest initiative—celebrated during the star-studded second annual gala in February with a dress code of black tie and Black designer—underscores James’s biggest accomplishment to date. “I’ve talked to a lot of those women,” she says, referring to the growing number of Black female founders who have raised a million dollars or more in venture capital in recent years, “and they tell me how much the pledge has impacted their business, their access and their opportunities. Knowing that the work the team’s doing is actually driving change—that part is everything to me. Having actual receipts for the work is really what I’m most proud of.”

James hopes that sharing her own challenges in *Wildflower: A Memoir* will provide inspiration and guidance while encouraging perseverance. “Part of the reason I wrote my book is so that people can track the journey of my life—see how I did it—and maybe learn both what to do and what not to do,” she says. The book’s title serves as a gentle call to action, summoning others to reach their full potential. “It’s about being able to bloom in places where no one would ever expect it, under the harshest climate, and blooming in your own way,” she says. “Be wild about it, because it’s your own personal self-expression. That’s really where the beauty of life is.” ■

Dress, $2,730, No Sesso. Shoes, price upon request, Brother Vellies. Head scarf, $450, Max Mara. Earrings, $360, ring (left), $90, and ring (right), price upon request, Misho. Bracelets, prices upon request, Alexis Bittar.

Dress, $575,
and gloves, $125,
Collina Strada.
Earrings, $245,
Misho. Bracelet,
price upon request,
Alexis Bittar.

Dress, $830, Theophilio. Shoes, $525, Brother Vellies. Earrings, price upon request, Oma the Label. Bracelets, $620 each, Third Crown. Ring (right), price upon request, and ring (left), $85, Misho.

Hair, Jacob Aaron Dillon. Makeup, Uzo for A-Frame Agency/ Nars. Photo assistants, Huey Tran and Timothy Fernandez. Fashion assistants, Alec Malin, Brooklin Phelps and Anyese Kirkland. Producer, Nalima Touré.

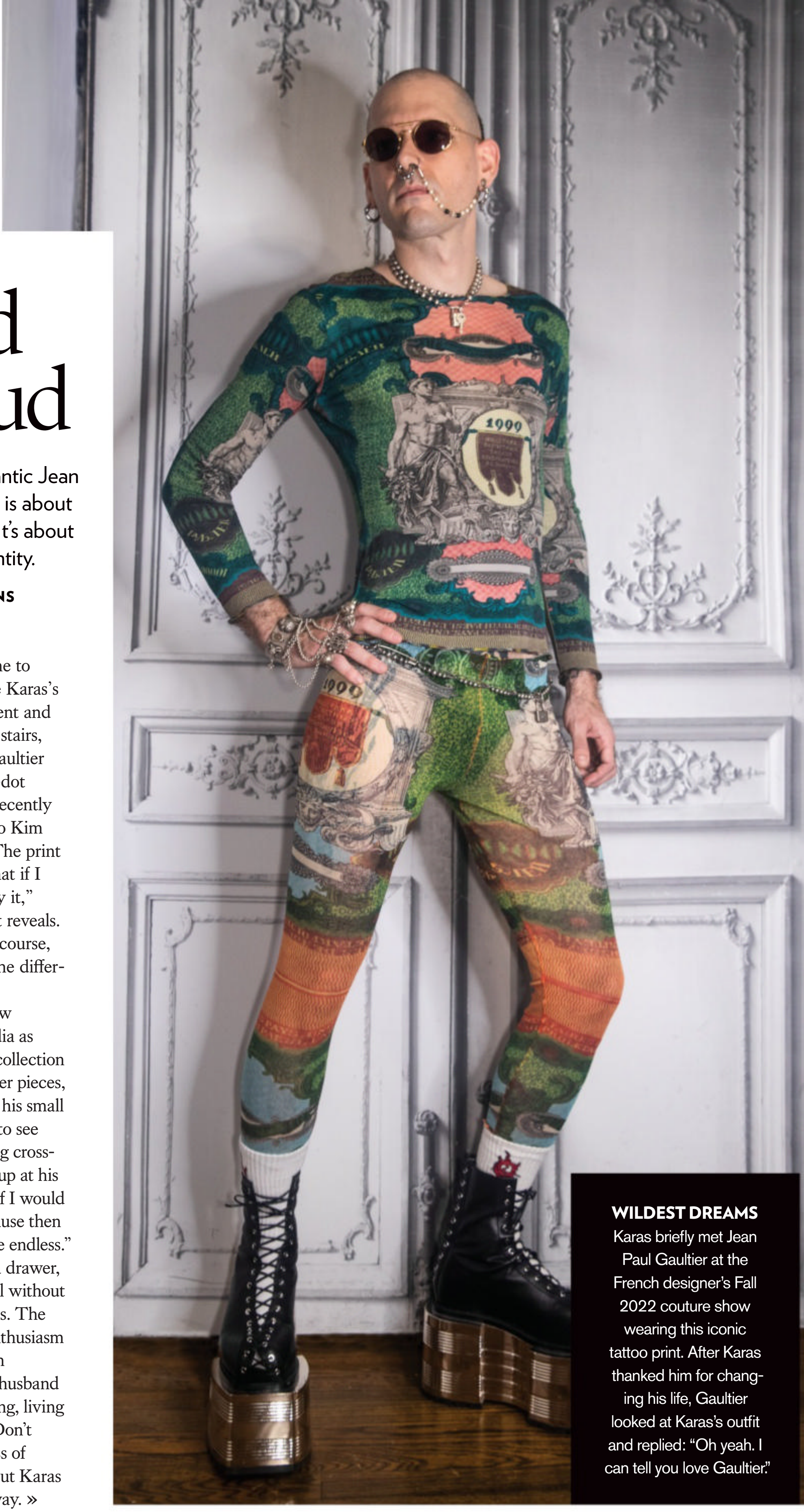
Loud & Proud

For Steve Karas, his gigantic Jean Paul Gaultier collection is about more than just clothes. It's about celebrating his identity.

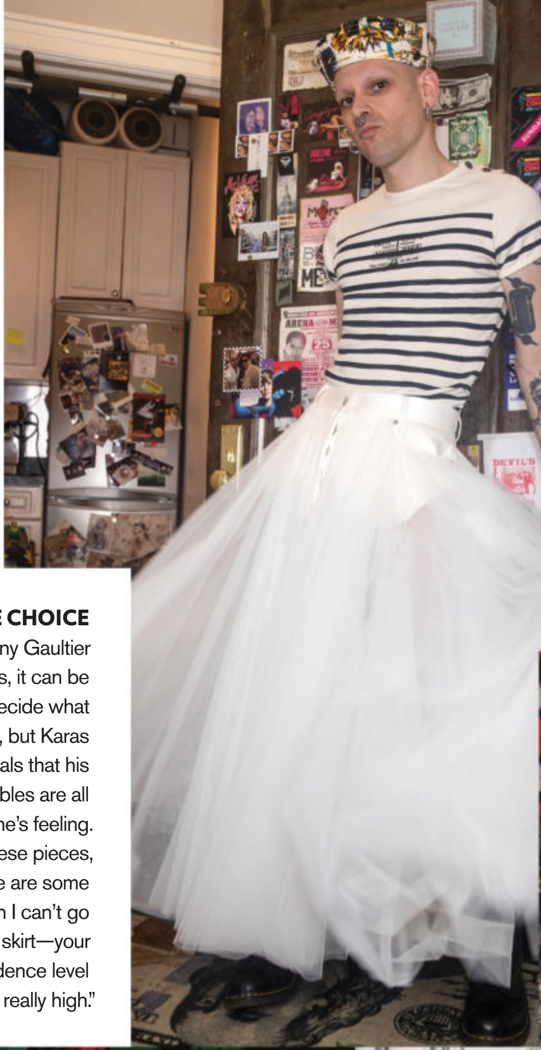
By **ANNIKA LAUTENS**

In the minutes it takes me to ring the buzzer of Steve Karas's New York City apartment and walk up a few flights of stairs, he purchased a Jean Paul Gaultier dress—specifically, a cyber-dot number from the '90s that recently re-entered It status thanks to Kim Kardashian and Cardi B. "The print has gotten so hard to find that if I come across it, I have to buy it," the hairdresser turned stylist reveals. "And once you have one, of course, you need two and then all the different colours."

This thinking explains how Karas (known on social media as @lordwarg) has compiled a collection of over 500 Jean Paul Gaultier pieces, all of which line the walls of his small Chelsea living room. "I like to see everything," he smiles, sitting cross-legged on the floor, looking up at his stockpile. "I promised myself I would never get a storage unit because then my collection would truly be endless." Yet already, you can't open a drawer, turn a knob or lean on a wall without hitting various Gaultier garbs. The space is overflowing with enthusiasm and dedication to the French designer, and Karas and his husband have been reduced to working, living and sleeping in one room. (Don't worry! They're in the process of moving to a bigger space.) But Karas wouldn't have it any other way. »

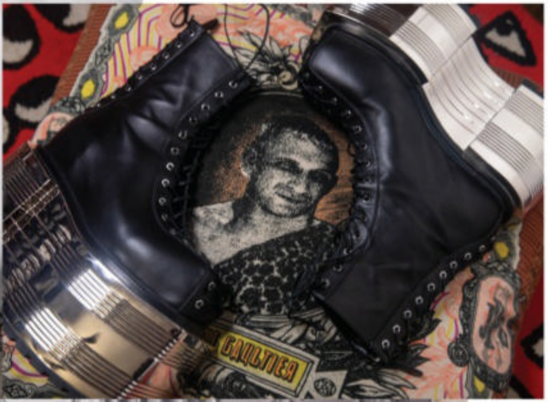


WILDEST DREAMS Karas briefly met Jean Paul Gaultier at the French designer's Fall 2022 couture show wearing this iconic tattoo print. After Karas thanked him for changing his life, Gaultier looked at Karas's outfit and replied: "Oh yeah. I can tell you love Gaultier."

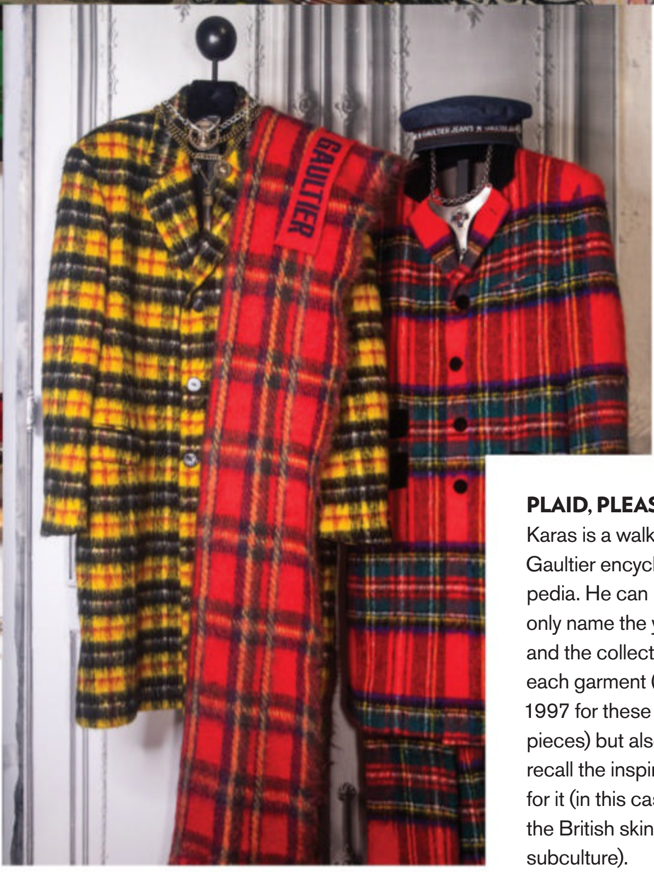


MULTIPLE CHOICE
With so many Gaultier garments, it can be hard to decide what to wear, but Karas reveals that his daily ensembles are all about how he's feeling. "I love these pieces, but there are some days when I can't go outside in a skirt—your confidence level needs to be really high."

IN THE HEIGHTS
Karas loves a platform, so as soon as he saw these boots—created in collaboration with Balmain's Olivier Rousteing—coming down the catwalk at the Jean Paul Gaultier Fall 2022 Couture show, he knew he had to have them.



NEVER ENOUGH
Coco Chanel said you should always take one accessory off before you leave the house, but Karas argues: "You should add two! You can never have too many." This explains why the collector has over 100 pieces of Gaultier jewellery.

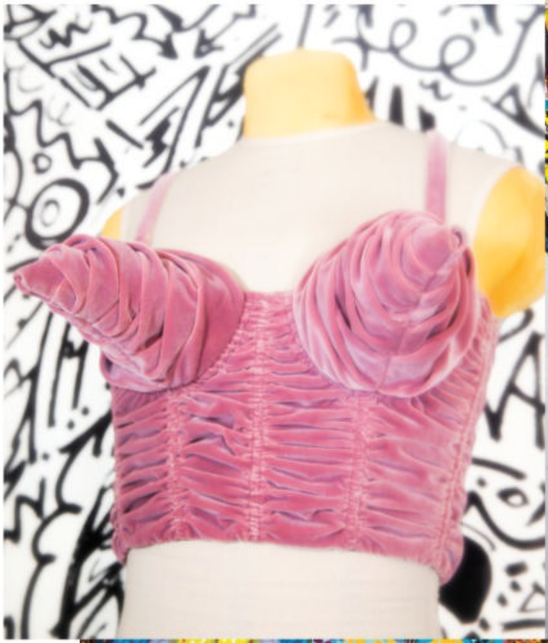


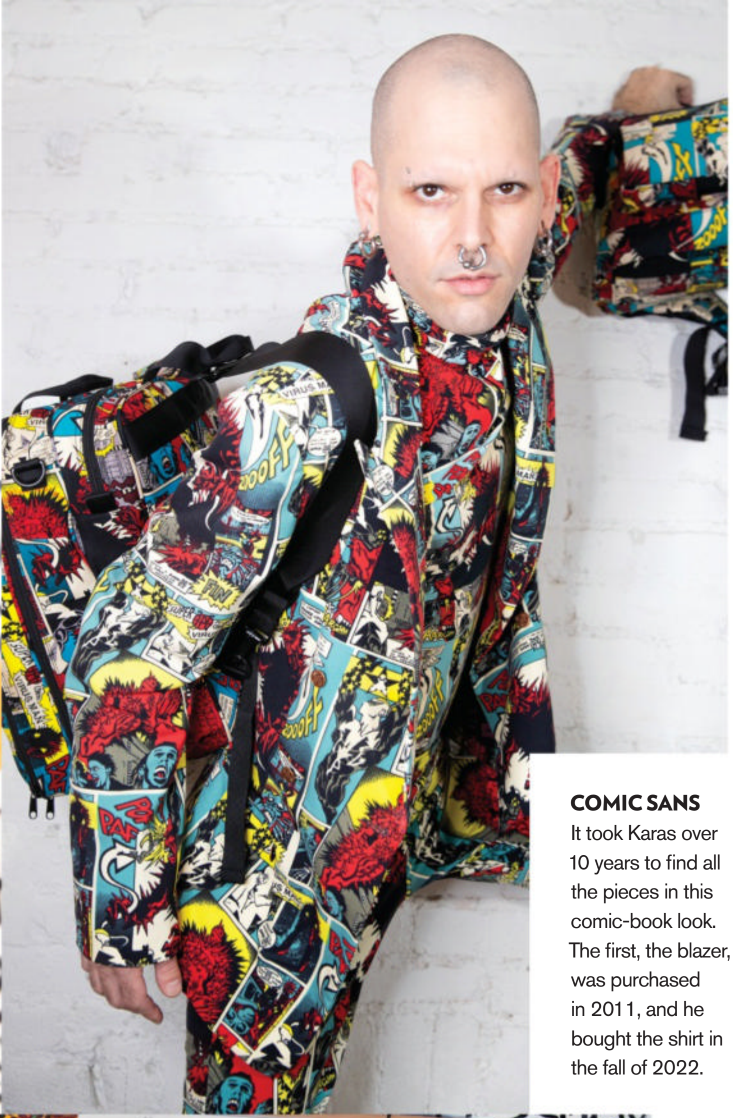
PLAID, PLEASE
Karas is a walking Gaultier encyclopedia. He can not only name the year and the collection of each garment (Fall 1997 for these plaid pieces) but also recall the inspiration for it (in this case, the British skinhead subculture).

PHOTOGRAPHY BY NATHAN SWEET. MAKEUP, TIA RIVERS/DIOR AND GOLDFADEN MD.

TO THE POINT

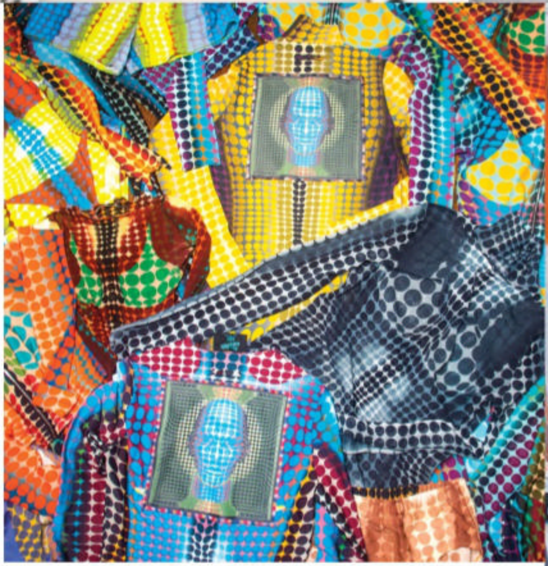
There would be no cone bra without Jean Paul Gaultier. While the designer first debuted the piece in his Spring 1984 collection—and Madonna made it famous in 1990—Karas purchased this pink velvet iteration in 2021.





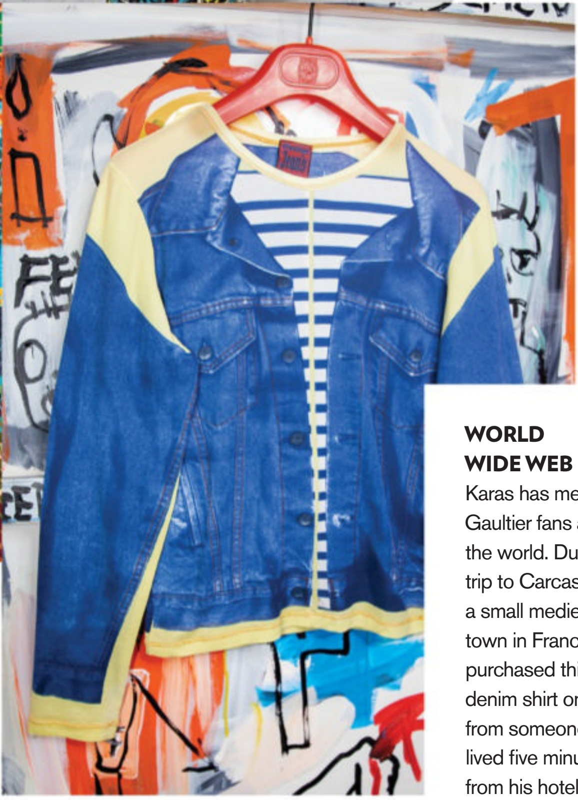
COMIC SANS

It took Karas over 10 years to find all the pieces in this comic-book look. The first, the blazer, was purchased in 2011, and he bought the shirt in the fall of 2022.



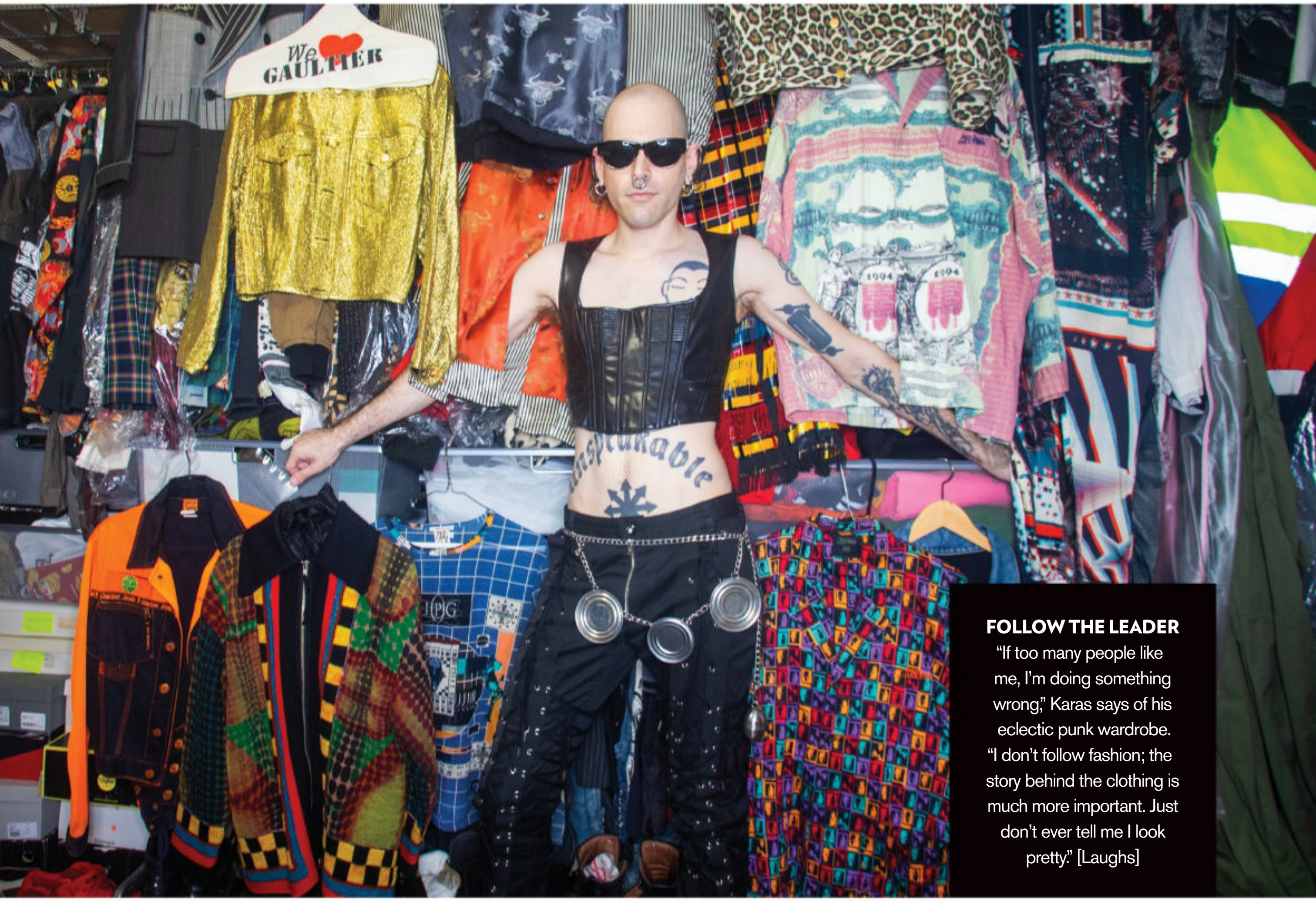
SEEING DOTS

Besides bustiers and sailor-inspired attire, Gaultier's cyber-dot print is one of his most recognizable signatures. Though it made its runway debut in 1995, the pattern has recently had a resurgence, thanks to the Kardashian-Jenner family.



WORLD WIDE WEB

Karas has met Gaultier fans all over the world. During a trip to Carcassonne, a small medieval town in France, he purchased this faux-denim shirt on eBay from someone who lived five minutes from his hotel.



FOLLOW THE LEADER "If too many people like me, I'm doing something wrong," Karas says of his eclectic punk wardrobe. "I don't follow fashion; the story behind the clothing is much more important. Just don't ever tell me I look pretty." [Laughs]

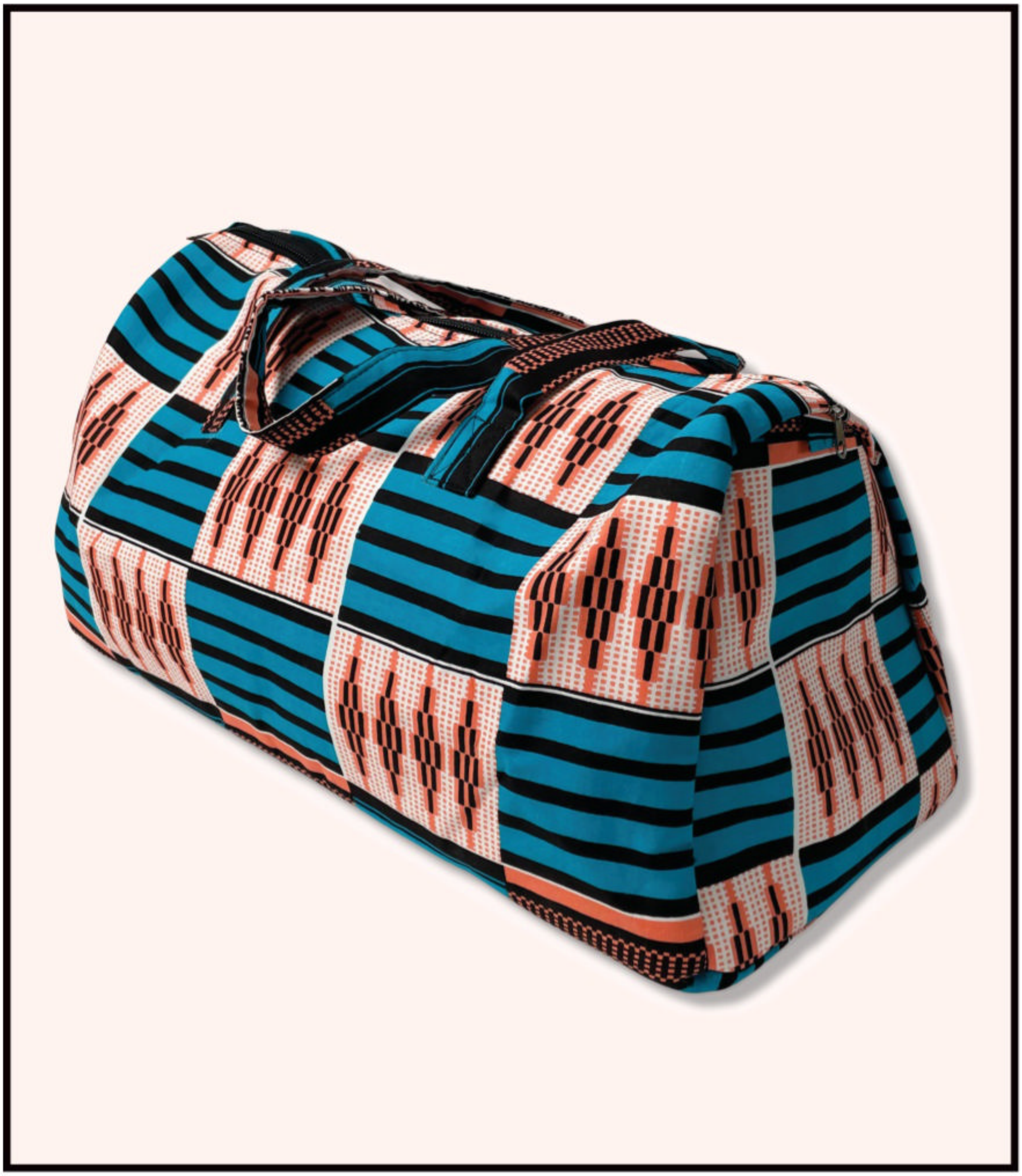
His experience growing up in Cannes, France, was more "grungy motels, food banks and homelessness" than international film festivals. He began shopping at vintage stores for practical purposes (read "cheaper clothes"), not passion. Still, even from a young age, he's always had a particular aesthetic, which his mother encouraged. "I once got sent home from school because I had spikes on my shoes," he laughs.

It was actually his mom who introduced him to Gaultier when he was around 10 years old. The local French news would often report on the designer's collections, and she would call Karas down to watch. After his years of being violently bullied for "looking effeminate" and "dressing flamboyantly," watching Gaultier's creations walk down the runway changed his life. "There was not a lot of gay representation back then, so to see him—a proud gay man—being celebrated was very powerful," Karas says, getting emotional. "He was the first person who showed me I could wear whatever I wanted and still be accepted. So my collection is very much a labour of love."

While Karas initially found a few $1 Gaultier T-shirts and other basics in thrift stores and on eBay, it wasn't until he moved to New York in 2010—and gained some financial security—that his hobby became his way of life. He admits that he sometimes searches through his "catalogue of online bookmarks" from morning until late at night for rare Gaultier finds. "My collection is made of patience and then some money," he shares, revealing that he found most of the wares in his wardrobe for about $200 each. "I don't drink. I don't do drugs. I take the subway. Gaultier is what I spend my money on." As such, Karas considers himself an archivist and one day hopes to host an exhibition at The Met with all of his finds, most of which hail from the '90s, his favourite Gaultier decade.

Despite his devotion to vintage, Karas doesn't think of himself as an environmentalist. "My clothes come wrapped in plastic," he says. "I don't know how they were produced. And by posting on social media, I make people want to buy more clothes. I don't feel comfortable with that." But his gaggle of Gaultier does deliver endless joy. "I think because I was broke when I was younger, I've always tried to surround myself with stuff," he shares. But upon reflection, he adds: "It's just amazing to think about the hundreds and hundreds of people who worked on these clothes and that the items are still in use today. I'm just so proud to make them live again." ■

PHOTOGRAPHY BY NATHAN SWEET. MAKEUP, TIA RIVERS/DIOR AND GOLDFADEN MD.



Carrying On

Assault survivor Judith Nyaralwi found herself with a great deal of downtime while recovering from her attack in her native Uganda. She was also eager to try new things and keep her mind off the pain. During a bus ride between the hours-apart regions of Kampala and Gulu, Nyaralwi came up with the idea for a line of vivid weekenders. The bags, which she creates and sells through Vancouver-based Obakki's artisan program, are made of *kitenge* (which is Kiswahili for "African wax cotton"), a fabric that can be found in countries such as Ghana, Kenya and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Nyaralwi learned her craft from a woman who insisted on teaching her how to sew. "At the time, she was about to retire and needed to transfer her skills to someone else," Nyaralwi says. Sewing became a coping and healing mechanism when Nyaralwi needed it most. "It's my safe place—just me, the ideas and my machine," she explains. Her new venture also led to friendships with five other assault survivors who purchased her work. "It acted as a door to in-depth sharing that has moved from 'hello' to one-on-one meetings with us talking, crying and laughing," she says.

TEXT BY ODESSA PALOMA PARKER

Photo: Turkish Red Crescent

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